

A
LETTER
TO A
LADY,
Furnishing her with
Scripture Testimonies
Against the Principal
Points and Doctrines
OF
POPERY.

*All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is Profitable for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness: That the Man of God may be Perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all Good Works, 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17.
The Law of the Lord is Perfect, converting the Soul, &c. Psal. 19. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.
Sacred the Scriptures, &c. John 5. 39.
Blessed is he that readeth, &c. Rev. 1. 3.*

Licensed, July 6. 1688.

L O N D O N,

Printed for John Taylor, at the Ship in St. Paul's Church-
Yard, MDCCLXXXVIII.

LETTER

TO A

LADY

publishing her name

Scripture Testimonies

Against the Papists

Points of Controversy



POPE

As the Pope is the head of the Church, and the Church is the body of Christ, the Pope is the head of the body of Christ. This is the doctrine of the Pope, and the doctrine of the Church. The Pope is the head of the Church, and the Church is the body of Christ. This is the doctrine of the Pope, and the doctrine of the Church.

Printed, July 16, 1684

A. W. D. N.

Printed for John Denton, at the Sign of the Star, in St. Dunstons Church-yard, London.

*Admonition to the Reader, concerning
the Authority and Use of the
Holy Scriptures.*

THe following Papers, being intended only for a private Satisfaction, and not for the publick View, are writ in a Stile agreeable to the Sex to which they are dedicated, and the few Arguments here and there added, either to explain or Illustrate a Text of Scripture, are such as are more obvious to a Female Capacity, than perhaps the common way of Arguing used by one great Disputant against another is. For it was no more my intent, than it was my Business, in writing to Women; who by Reason of their general want of Learning, understand nothing of Logical Reasoning, and as little of Syllogismal Inferences, to endeavour to make a thing plain, by rendring it more unintelligible: But to make every thing as obvious and plain to the most ordinary Understanding, as I might, tho' my Words were never so homely; And though it is confess'd, The Lady to whom these Papers were especially directed, is a Person endued with better Parts, and more Learning than others of her Sex generally are; yet I considered, That many more of her Society or Acquaintance, might be concerned in the Reading of them: And therefore I thought, as a plain Method would not be unplea-

sant to the Lady her self, so it would certainly be both more Acceptable and Profitable to others, not loaden with so much Sagacity and Understanding.

But, since in this Undertaking I have wholly relied on the Testimony of the Scriptures, and have drawn all my Arguments from them ; I think it proper to vindicate my Proceeding that way, by giving the Reader a cursory Account of the Supreme Authority of the Sacred Writings, consisting in two Particulars : The First is, Their containing, fully, all things needful for our Salvation. And the Second, Their being sufficient to determine Points of Doubt and Controversie. In both which I shall still make my Appeal to the Scriptures themselves ; and likewise intermix a few Testimones of the Fathers, not for Confirmation of the Scriptures Authority, for that is evident enough in it self ; but to shew the Opinion of those great Pillars of the Church in a Matter, about which there is so great a Disagreement betwixt us and the Church of *Rome*.

I begin therefore with the first Evidence of the Supreme Authority of the Scriptures ; Their containing, fully, all things needful for our Salvation.

The Evangelist, *Joh. 20. 30.* tells us, *That Jesus did many signs, in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these, says he, are written, That ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.* " And this Gospel by *S. John*, may without Injury, be thought " to excel the other three, says *S. Cyril* ; and he gives no weak Reasons for it : One of which is, " That it " contains all things pertaining to Truth, which the " other do also, but not in so high a Strain : For " whereas the rest do most Exquisitely describe the Genealogy of our Saviour, either descending from *Abraham* to *Joseph*, or ascending from *Joseph* to *Adam* ; " *S. John*

*Cyril, in
Praf. in
Johan.*

"S. John has not much laboured in these Matters, but
 "with an aspiring Mind seems to soar beyond Human
 "Possibility, and is not afraid, in express Words to set
 "down his Ineffable Generation ; *In the beginning was*
 "*the word, and the word was with God, and the word was*
 "*God. The same was in the beginning with God : And so*
 "aspires directly to the Foundation of Divine Truth.
 Where, by the way, it will not be amiss to observe,
 That this Evangelist was the beloved Disciple of our
 Lord, and therefore it cannot reasonably be supposed he
 would conceal any thing from him that was necessary to
 be known : But on the contrary, he revealed more to
 him than was needful to be set down, in some Particu-
 lars whereof he was commanded to be Silent ; as may
 be seen, Rev. 10. 4. But when any thing might be
 known, he is to declare it, Chap. 22. 10. and Chap. 1. 3.
They are blessed who read and hear the words of this prophe-
cy, with an intent to keep those things which are written
therein. So then, though we are ignorant of some
 things, yet by what is written, we may sufficiently be
 acquainted with whatever is necessary for us to know.

S. Paul, Acts 20. after he had told the Ephesians, Verse
 30, *That of their own selves should arise men, speaking per-*
verse things to draw away disciples after them. At the 32
 Verse he commends them to God, and to the Word of
 his Grace, which, he tells them, *is able to build them up,*
and to give them an inheritance among all them which are
sanctified. And lest it should be thought that he had
 broached some unwritten Traditions of his own, he pro-
 fesses Chap. 26. 22. *That having obtained help of God,*
he still continued, witnessing both to small and great, but
saying no other things than those which the Prophets and Mo-
ses did say should come. Accordingly he tells the Romans,
 in his Epistle to them, Chap. 1. 16. *That he was not asha-*
med of the gospel of Christ, because it is the power of God

" should descend from Heaven , we must prefer the
 " Testimony of Scriptures before them : According to
 the Apostle, *Gal. 1. 8. Though we, or an Angel from
 Heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you, than that which
 we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.* All which
 I take to be Indications plain enough of the sufficiency
 of the Scriptures, as to all things pertaining to Salvation.

But besides this, I said they were also in themselves
 sufficient to determin Points of Controversie.

The Psalmist says of the Word of God, That it is a
 Lamp to his Feet, and a Light to his Path, *Psal. 119.*
105. And therefore it was that he so often speaks of
 ordering himself according to this Word, and prays so
 earnestly to God to enable him to do it.

And thus the Prophet expostulates with the Jews, *Isa.*
8. 19, 20. When they shall say unto you, Seek unto them
which have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and
mutter ; Should not a people seek unto their God ? for the
living, to the dead ? To the law and to the testimony : if
they speak not according to this word, it is because there is
no light in them.

It was the way of the Apostles, on all occasions , to
 have recourse to the Scriptures. Thus St. Peter, in his
 Sermon to *Cornelius*, to confirm his Doctrin of the *Messias*,
 says, *To him give all the Prophets witness, that through his*
Name whosoever believeth on him, shall receive remission of
sins, Act. 10. 43. And that it was the constant practice
 of St. Paul, no Man can deny that has had the least
 converse with his Writings ; especially that great Axiom
 of his, which has never been contradicted, That the
 Scriptures are given by Inspiration of God, and are pro-
 fitable for Doctrin, for Reproof, for Correction, for
 Instruction in Righteousness, is a more than ordinary in-
 stance of his Opinion in this particular. And as it is writ-
 ten, was the only refuge of those Primitive Builders of the

the Church. And it was the very same method that our Lord himself took to reprove the Tempter, *Matth.* 4. 4. *It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, &c.* And *Vers.* 7. *It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.* And *Vers.* 10. *It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God.* And thus he us'd always to bring the Testimonies of *Moses* and the Prophets against the impious Objections of the Jews; very often telling them, That he did not speak his own Words, but the Word of him that sent him; that is, the Word of God.

And now, would it not be a thing to be wonder'd at, if the Holy Fathers of the Church should be ignorant of this way of arguing? Or if they did know it, that they would not chuse to follow his Example whom they pretended to worship and obey? But we have no cause to wonder at this, but rather at their ignorance, or wilful stubbornness, who pretend to be acquainted with them, and yet, seemingly at least, assert their Sentiments and Practice in this matter, to be contrary to their Predecessors.

*Epist. ad
Eustath. 80*

*Idem Etib.
Defin. 80.
c. 22. 6.*

It was usual with *Basil* thus to express himself, *ἐκ τῶν ἁγίων γραμμάτων*; *Let the Scriptures, which are divinely inspir'd, be Judge between us.* For, says he, *Whatsoever is contrary to them, is not of Faith, and therefore sinful.* Every Word or Cause ought to be tried and confirm'd by the Holy Scriptures.

*Cyprian ad
Pomp. cont.
Syrph. Pap.*

Neither does *St. Cyprian* come behind him in this particular; "If (says he) the Pipes through which
"Water is conveyed into the City, should be suddenly
"deficient, should we not go presently to the Spring, that
"thence we may know the cause of the defect, whether
"the Spring it self is dry, or whether the Pipes are stop'd
"by any thing which may hinder the course of the Wa-
"ter? And so the Pipes being clear'd, the City may be
"supplied with Water as before. So ought the Mini-
sters

“ sters of the Gospel to do: In matters of Doubt they
 “ should go to our Lord and his Apostles, that they may
 “ model their Actions by their Doctrine, as the Fountain
 “ and Original of Divine Truth.

Tertullian likewise would accept of no Argument
 that was not drawn from the Scriptures. And by this
 he confuted the Hereticks of his time. “ For (says he)
 “ take away the Sophistry of the Heathen Philosophers,
 “ which the Hereticks make use of, and when they come
 “ to argue from the Scriptures they will not be able to
 “ stand.

St. Chrysostom says, That if any thing is asserted with-
 out the authority of the Scriptures to back it on, it leaves
 the Hearers in doubt. Οὐδὲν ἄτις γέγονεν ἀγῶν, says *Clement*
Alexandrinus; We say nothing against the Scriptures.
 And *Theodoret*, ἡ δὲ βίβλην ἀντιμαρτυρεῖται τὴν ἀλήθειαν; I confide in the
 Scriptures only. To which we may add his Testimony of
 the Saying of *Constantine the Great*, “ That the Books of
 “ the Evangelists and Apostles, and the Oracles of the
 “ the ancient Prophets do evidently teach us, what we
 “ are to think of the Divine Power. Therefore in every
 “ seditious Controversie, let us discuss the Point in
 “ question, by the Testimony of those divinely inspir’d
 “ Writings. Whence we may see, that all the Fathers
 are not against us in this matter.

I think *Origen* may come in for one on our side. For
 in his Comment upon the Sixteenth Chapter of the
 Epistle to the *Romans*, having explained those Admoni-
 tions of the Apostle, *vers.* 17, 18. and coming to *vers.*
 19. where the Apostle tells the *Romans*, That their
 Obedience is come abroad unto all Men: And that he
 is therefore glad on their behalf, “ The Apostle (says
 “ he) therefore rejoices over those that were obedient,
 “ being sure that as he had taught them not to use that
 “ general Obedience which they indifferently pay to all

"Men, for that which is due to God only, whereby
 "they obey God rather than Man ; so this Obedience was
 "embraced by them before the other. For 'tis indeed
 "an argument of no little discretion, but of a quick and
 "most piercing Judgment, if we can discern what Opin-
 "ion is to be followed, and what is rather to be reject-
 "ed. In a word, our Lord himself in the Gospel says,
 "*Beware of them which come to you in sheeps cloathing, but*
 "*inwardly are devouring wolves.* Therefore a watchful
 "Soul and settled Mind are required in order to our dis-
 "covering the plain simplicity of Sheep, or the more
 "hidden malice and greediness of Wolves. Whence
 "we may learn what great danger they are in, who
 "neglect the study of the Holy Scriptures, from which
 "only they can be furnished with such a knowledge
 "and discretion.

St. *Austin* has an Expression, which makes a great
 bluster in the World ; "I would not believe the Gospel
 "(says he) if the Authority of the Catholick Church
 "did not move me to it. Upon this the Authority of
 the Church is magnified above the Authority of the
 Scriptures.

But if St. *Austin* did not intend any such thing, where
 are we then ? He express'd himself once to this purpose,
Aug. Conf. "Thou, O God, hast assur'd me, that not they who
L. 6. c. 5. "believ'd thy Books, which with so great Authority
 "thou hast establish'd in almost all the World ; but
 "they who did not, were culpable : Neither are they
 "to be heard, who shall ask me, how I know, that those
 "Books are given to Men by the Spirit of One most true
 "God. Which shews, that he did not altogether rely
 on the Testimony of the Church, which was only out-
 ward ; but chiefly ~~to~~ the inward Witness of the Holy
 Ghost in his Conscience. But we may know more of
 his Mind by more of his Words ; "We (says he) do
 "not

“ not bring a false Ballance, that we may make things
 “ weigh what we please, and how we please, and so *Idem. cont.*
 “ give judgment what is light, and what heavy : But *Donat. l. 2.*
 “ we give you the divine Ballance of the Holy Scrip- *c. 6.*
 “ tures, the Treasures of the Lord, and by that we tell
 “ you what is heavy ; yet not we, but the Lord himself ;
 “ who having weighed all things already, we tell you
 “ from him what is heavy, &c. And can we think that
 Great Father ever intended to set up the Authority of
 the Church above the Scriptures ? He does not say,
 We tell you from the Church what is light, and what
 heavy ; but, we tell you from the Scriptures. And
 thus again, “ There are (says he) certain Books of the *Id. de unit.*
 “ Lord, to whose Authority we wholly assent, which *Eccel. c. 3.*
 “ we firmly believe, and in all things obey. In them
 “ let us seek the Church, by them let us discuss our
 “ Cause. Now, if *St. Austin* did really believe the
 Scriptures, on no other account than barely the Churches
 Testimony, why does he say, He must find the Church
 in the Scriptures ? This would be to run round in an in-
 determinate circle ; first to look for the Church in the
 Scriptures, and then to search for the Scriptures in the
 Church. I don’t see how these can stand together.
 But let it be as it will, we may with more safety give
 credit to what a Man is constant in, than to what he says
 but once, or, it may be, never at all ; and so we may
 assure our selves of the concession of this Holy Father to
 what we assert, That the Scriptures are the supreme
 Decider of Controversies. The only thing needful to be ad-
 ded to what has been already produc’d, is, That nothing
 ought to be put to, or taken from the Word of God.

Bellarmin acknowledges the Scriptures to be a Rule,
 but says ’tis only partly so ; for the Scriptures joyn’d
 with Traditions, make one perfect Rule.

But we have seen that the Scriptures alone are a per-
 fect

fect Rule ; and, " An Infallible Rule (says St. Basil)
Basil. cont. " ought to be so, without addition or diminution. And
Eunom. l. 1. " further, That it is a manifest departing from the Faith,
Id. Conf. " and an evidence of Pride, either to take away any thing
Fid. " from what is written, or to add any thing that is not
 written; for our Lord has said, *My sheep hear my voice.* And
Jerom. in " (says St. Jerom) Whatever does not come from the
Matth. 23. " Holy Scriptures, is as easily condemn'd as approv'd.
Euseb. Hist. *Eusebius* tells us, " That after the Death of the
L. 3. c. 32. " Apostles, though the Scriptures were extant, yet the
 " Church did not long continue an unspotted Virgin,
 " but Heresies and Corruptions of the Gospel encreased
 " apace. And then I would fain know what method
 the Orthodox Doctors took to purge and refine the
 Church again ? I suppose it may be answer'd, that,
 A General Council was to represent the whole Church,
 and to determine the Points in Controversie. Granting
 this, the next Question will be, which way the Doctors as-
 sembled in Council proceeded in this great Affair ? Did
 they appeal to the Church ? The most impious Here-
 ticks would confidently affirm, That only they were
 of the True Church. Wou'd they appeal to the Fathers ?
 There were many Learned Men who in their Writings
 maintain'd the worst of Heresies. Wou'd they appeal
 to Apostolical Traditions ? The Founders of many of
 the greatest Heresies, lived in the Times of the Apostles ;
 and on that score, had as good a plea for their knowing
 their Sentiments, as any of the Orthodox Fathers could
 have. I am certain the first *Nicene* Council took no such
 way, but on all occasions urg'd the Scriptures against the
 Opinions of those Hereticks they were to deal with, as
 might be shewn at large, if it was absolutely necessary
 to our purpose.

At present let us content our selves with a few Te-
 rimonies of the Fathers against such proceedings.

And

And first, against Appealing to the Churches Custome; *St Cyprian* says, "a Custome which some have taken up, Cyp. ad Pomp. cont. Stepb. Pap.
 "ought not to prevail against the Truth; for Custome
 "without the Truth, is but the Ornament of an Error :
 "For which Reason let us forsake the Error of such a Cu-
 "stome, and follow the Truth. And when *S. Austin* bids
 us seek the Church in the Scriptures; he cannot intend,
 in my Opinion, That we should follow the Church in any
 thing repugnant to the Scriptures : But besides, A Rule
 of Faith ought to be Perfect. But *Origen* tells us, That as Orig. in Ezech. hom. 1.
 "on every Floor there is Chaff as well as Wheat, so is
 "the Church on Earth, some part Wheat, and the rest
 "Chaff. And upon *Matth. 21. 14.* where it is said, 14. in Matth. hom. 15.
That the blind and the lame came into the Temple to Christ,
and he healed them : "The Moral Construction of this,
 says he, "is, That in the Church all cannot see, neither
 "can all walk Upright; but some are Blind and others
 "Lame. To which he immediately applies this Reme-
 "dy, as the most effectual: They, says he, who are
 "sensible of their own Blindness, since there is no other
 "way to be rid of it, but by the Word of God, they
 "should apply themselves to that, and they cannot miss
 "of a Cure. Which is enough to prove the Insuffici-
 cy of the Churches Customs or Authority, as to Mat-
 ters of Faith at least.

Secondly, Neither will the Testimonies of the Fathers
 be of any Force in this Particular : For a Rule of Faith
 must be full of Knowledge, and sufficiently able to in-
 struct us. But what says *S. Austin* of himself? "I am Aug. ep. 119.
 "not only ignorant, says he, in many other Things, but
 "even in the Holy Scriptures themselves, I am yet to
 "learn more than I know already. And thus he else Ep. ad Hier.
 "where expresses himself: To the Books of the Scriptures
 "only, which are called Canonical, do I owe this Ho-
 "nour, that I firmly believe, That none of their Pen-
 "Men

*Tertul. de
preser.
haeret.*

*Biel sup.
Can. Miss.
l. 41.*

*Aug. in
Psalm. 57.*

*Iren. l. 3.
c. 1.*

*Bellarmin. de
Concil. l. 2.
c. 12.*

“men have err’d in any thing they have written. But I
“esteem other Writers according to their Sanctity and
“Learning: I do not think any thing true, meerly be-
“cause it was their Opinion. Which very well agrees
with that Axiom of *Tertullian*; “If, says he, a Bishop,
“or Deacon, if a Widow or Maid, if a Doctor, or even
“a Martyr should err from the Rule, would the Error
“be e’r the Truer or Better for their Sakes? We do not
“prove the Faith by the Persons, but the Persons by the
“Faith. And the Acknowledgment of *Biel* is to the
same purpose; “That the Authority of the Fathers com-
“pells no Man to assent to their Sayings, unless they
“build on the Holy Scriptures, or Divine Revelation.
On this account therefore *S. Austin* might well cry out,
“Let our Writings be withdrawn, that the Book of
God may be introduced.

And as for Apostolical Traditions, let the Testimony
of *Irenaeus* serve for all: “By the Apostles, says he, the
“Gospel came down to us, which they then preached;
“and afterward by the Will of God, they delivered to
“us in the Scriptures, what was to be the future Foun-
“dation and Pillar of our Faith.

Now, if neither the Customes of the Church, nor
the Judgment of the Fathers, nor Tradition, can be a
perfect Rule of Faith; no more can all these united in
a General Council be so: For a Rule must be in every
respect perfect. But we have seen, That the Church is
in many respects Defective, and the Fathers subject to
Ignorance and Error: And if *Irenaeus* may be credited,
The Apostles preached nothing contrary to what they
have left us in Writing, and therefore there can be no
Place for Apostolical Traditions. So that a Rule, which
is Imperfect, and Defective in every Part, must needs
be so in the whole. And *Bellarmin* himself has proved,
That the Decrees of General Councils cannot be a per-
fect

fect Rule, because they cannot pretend to immediate Divine Revelation ; That they may Err in some things, and in many of their Definitions, they conclude only Probably. But a Rule of Faith ought to be every way Perfect, and to conclude necessarily. And such an absolute Perfect Rule the Scriptures appear to be, not only from their own Testimony, but from Testimonies of the greatest Pillars of the Church, in the Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Centuries. And therefore if any Man's Interest has led him to a contrary Judgment in the later Ages of the Church, his Opinions ought not to be set up as a Standard against Antiquity joyn'd with Truth. From hence, then, we may infer, what has been already asserted, That the Scriptures being of themselves a perfect and Un-erring Rule, nothing must be put to, or taken from them. To which purpose, besides what has been produced already, the Reader may give himself the trouble of Perusing the following Texts ; *Deut.* 12. 32. *Josh.* 1. 7. *Prov.* 30. 6. *Gal.* 1. 8. and 3. 15. *Rev.* 22. 18, 19. And let him learn the Danger of Adding or Taking away, that is, Doing any thing contrary to the Scriptures. From these *Lev.* 10. 2. *Isai.* 1. 12, 13, 14, and 66. 3. *Hof.* 9. 15. *Matth.* 15. 6, 9. *Mark* 7. 9. *Gal.* 4. 10. From all which Texts, will evidently appear the Invalidity of any thing that is not built upon the true Foundation, and the danger of being led away by such Vanities. And so I hope, I have sufficiently vindicated my Reliance on the Testimony of the Scriptures in the Business of the following Undertaking.

I shall only trouble the Reader with two or three necessary Cautions, concerning the right Use and Understanding of those Sacred Writings, and then give him his Liberty to proceed.

I. If any Man will make choice of the Scriptures for his Guide in matters that concern his Well-being here and

and hereafter, he must have a care of believing every Spirit. We must not take things of such Moment on Trust, meerly because they are asserted by one that Pretends to great Learning or Inspiration ; for we are to look on the Gentlemen of these Times, as such as will make the best they can of every Word, when they meet with one of an ordinary Capacity.

Therefore, II. It behoveth every Man that hath any regard to his own Safety, to search into these things himself ; to read the Holy Scriptures diligently, that so he may learn from them whether such things are true or no.

But as I am now Writing to those of the meanest Rank, in Learning ~~at least~~, It is necessary that I caution such Readers of the Scriptures, against laying too much stress on the literal Interpretation of a Text : For the Holy Ghost very often makes use of Metaphors and other Obscurities, wherein the Sense is not obvious to every Eye : And tho', as S. Austin says, *There is nothing so obscure in one Place which in another is not made plain* : Yet it is not supposed that an ordinary Reader knows how to find that Place out, or if he does, that he has Judgment enough to satisfie himself. For the Scriptures consist of a Soul and a Body : The Body is the Letter, and the Soul is the true Interpretation. *Every Man, therefore, says Origen, that desires to come to the Knowledge of the Truth, must have his Eye on every Word, for every Nation has a different way of speaking ; let him therefore mind rather what is signified, than with what Words it is expressed. For there are some things, which no Human Words can explain, but they are only conceivable in an honest Understanding. By which Rule also we come to the Knowledge and Understanding of the Holy Scriptures, that what we read is not to be understood according to the Letter, but according to the Divinity of that Holy Spirit which inspired it. Wherefore the Honest Reader will do well to take care, That he is not drawn by*
the

the Letter out of the right way. And to this end the best advice I can give him, is, Before he presumes to read, to beg the Assistance of God's Holy Spirit to direct and enlighten his Understanding. And when he meets with an obscure Text, let him pray again, and besides that, communicate his Doubt to some learned Minister, of whose Integrity he is in some Measure assured, and by these means he may be fully satisfied. And thus he will shew himself an humble Enquirer, and manifest to the World, That his Proceedings are from a Principle of Honesty, that he searches only for a right Information; and on these Accounts he has a Right to that encouraging Precognition of S. Cyril, in his Preface to his Comments on S. John's Gospel: *The Doctrine of all the Evangelists, says he, is most excellent, and of Divine Extraction: For as it overlooks all things, as it were from the top of a high Tower: It so amply accommodates it self to all that follow it, that whoever thirsts after Divine Truth (if with an honest Mind, he enquires into the Sense of the Scriptures) he may easily meet with whatever concerns him. But this gracious Satisfaction is not conferred on those, who make a rash Search, and are rather led by Human Reasons than the Authority of the Scriptures, (so far as the Holy Ghost does not dwell with a depraved Soul, nor does he throw his precious Jewels before Swine, to be trodden under foot) but pours out his Truth into the Hearts of all Religious Searchers after it, who not affecting Cavils and Disputes, pursue the ready Road to the Kingdom, in sincerity.*

To conclude, *That true Meat and Drink which we have from the Word of God, says S. Jerome, is the true Knowledge of the Scriptures.* And all Men having the greatest Encouragement imaginable to read those Holy Writings, if they read them to good Purposes, and not to wrest them to their own Ends; let us go to that Fountain of Divine Truth, from whence the meanest Reader

Hier. in
Ecc. 4. 3.

may learn whatever is necessary for him to know. For, says the Royal Psalmist, *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul, the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the Hearts: The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether; more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold, sweeter also than honey, and the honey-comb. Moreover, by them are his Servants warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward, Plal. 19. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.* And our Blessed Saviour himself, bids us *Search the Scriptures*, Joh. 5. 39. I shall conclude therefore with that Pathetick Exhortation of S. Chrysostome; *That all Men would read the Scriptures, and that not cursorily, but with the greatest Diligence; that they would get them Bibles as Physick for their Souls: And if they will not read the whole, let them turn to the New Testament, and read the Gospels, Acts of the Apostles and Epistles, those excellent Teachers: If any Misfortune befall us, come hither as to a Store-house full of wholesome Remedies; hence take Relief and Comfort in all Afflictions, whether loss of Goods, or Friends, or Life it self; let them not only read once, but turn over these Writings again and again, and fasten what they read to their Minds, that they may be sure to remember it: For this is the Cause of all Evils, That Men are ignorant in the Scriptures. If we go to War without Weapons, how can we be Safe? Men that are armed may overcome, at least in a Capacity to secure themselves; but those who are unarmed must fall. Therefore do not lay all the Burthen upon the Ministers Shoulders; be Sheep, but not as Creatures void of Reason, but as Men that know something, &c.* And as many as walk according to this Rule, Peace be on them, and Mercy, and upon the Israel of God. Amen.

Chrys. in
Col. 3. ^{hom.}
9.

Gal. 6. 16.

A Letter to a Lady, &c.

M A D A M,

THe Tenderneſs of the Female Sex renders it more obnoxious to the Sophiſtry of the Times; and the deſire of Information in Matters of Religion, may make them the more earneſt in reading the Pieces ſent abroad in the preſent Controverſie. And I preſume I need not tell you of the ſubtilty of ſome Men, who to make their Proceedings the more effectual, direct their Inſinuations eſpecially to thoſe they think are leaſt able to withſtand them: Your own Experience, I ſuppoſe, may be Evidence ſufficient as to this Particular.

There are a ſort of Men in the World who live by their Wits, and will neglect no opportunity to inſinuate ſtrange fancies into the Minds of the weaker ſort of People, to make them believe a thing is White, upon no other ground than becauſe it is not Black, though it may be Crimſon in grain. *Of this ſort are they* (ſays the Apoſtle, 2 Tim. 3. 6.) *who creep into houſes, and lead captive ſilly women, &c.* And he would have us know, *That in the laſt days, by means of theſe Men, perilous times ſhall come.* The whole Prophecy is interpreted of the Jeſuites, by Men of Learning in the Church of Rome, as you may ſee at large in a little Book (call'd *The Moral Practiſe of the Jeſuites*) publiſh'd by the Doctors of the Sorbon. And theſe Men have Impudence enough to intrude themſelves into Ladies Cloſets, and venturing on their good nature, to uſe their ſkill and ſophiſtical endeavours to cajole them into a decoy. They'll Reform the Church of Rome in a quarter of an hour, and wipe off all Imputations

tions of Error, while one may say, *What's this?* if you'll believe their Stories. They'll tell you that the things which have so often been prov'd against that Church, are all Lies: That no such Errors are embrac'd by her; but that the Church of *England*, if their bold Assertions will do the business, has only been guilty; and if She had not given her Sons Learning enough to defend her Innocence, their Forgeries must have pass'd for current. But I hope, Madam, you know the Church of *England* better, than to give credit to every mouth that is open against Her. And I know you have a discerning faculty, beyond many of your Sex, whereby to judge of Opinions, right and wrong. However, give me leave to present you with a small parcel of *Scripture Testimonies* against some of the Principal Errors of the *Roman Church*: I say *Scripture Testimonies*, because though there are many excellent Pieces publish'd by our Learned Divines, yet they are too full of Learning for most Female capacities, and the Treatises large on every Subject; when, as I think the Scriptures the Supreme Judge in Matters of Religion, so I suppose a short Catalogue of Texts from thence, directly opposite to such Tenets as we justly charge upon the Church of *Rome*, and by that means a Refutation of most of those Tenets in one short Essay, will be more profitable, as I hope it will be more acceptable to an ordinary Understanding. So that upon this account, as you will hereby, with more ease, be furnish'd with what you may be sure is true, being drawn from the Fountain of Truth, you will, I hope, be the more easily induc'd to pardon my Undertaking, as designing nothing but Honesty.

I have chosen this way of Writing to you, Madam, First, because I know you delight in conversing with the Holy Writings, and so I shall be more conformable to your Inclinations. And Secondly, though I reverence the

the Judgment of the Fathers, of the Church, and General Councils duly assembled, and not sway'd by popular Insolence; yet, as I once objected to one by word of mouth, without receiving a satisfactory Answer, The Church of *Rome* says, That *we* have False Copies of the Fathers; and we answer, That *they* have corrupted the True; so that one of us must needs be in the wrong: And how shall we be satisfied in this, without comparing them to the Testimonies of the Scriptures? And as for General Councils, they have, of late, been purg'd, or rather perverted by the Over-ruling Power of Popes and their Popular Factions, insomuch, that when they began to act against the Interest of the See of *Rome*, though never so justly, they were no longer allowed the liberty due to General Councils: And then what dependence can we have from them? And Lastly, the Infallibility of the Church of *Rome*, can be no better a Decider of Controversies, than the other two, because that must be prov'd, if possible, from the Scriptures. So that, when all other Instruments have been tried, the Scriptures will prove the only Infalible Touch-stone. From these and the like Considerations, this Piece was at first conceiv'd, and is now produc'd for your Service, and for such of your Female Companions or Acquaintance as you shall think fit to communicate it to; and I hope it will give Satisfaction.

Be pleas'd therefore to consider, that 'tis the duty of every Christian to read and be acquainted with the Holy Scriptures. And though the Council of *Trent* denied the reading of them to the Laity, pretending that the Vulgation of them was the cause of so many Heresies abroad in the World; yet, by the leave of the Fathers assembled in that Particular General Council, we can't conceive how a Country Plough-Jobber, should, by reading the Scriptures, be the Author of an Opinion, either

Orthodox

Orthodox or Erroneous: But, as might easily be prov'd if it were to the present purpose, the Original of all Sects were Men, who to shew their Parts and Learning, took upon them to scrutinise and enquire into the Sense of Holy Writ, and so spread the prime Infection. I will trouble you with but an Instance or two to this purpose, and so proceed.

Arius, that known Heretick, as well for his Learning, as the many Profelites he gain'd to his Party, meeting with that Text, *Joh. 17. 3. This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent*; thought of a trick, by misplacing a Point, to seclude Christ from being True God. In the Original 'tis, *This is life eternal; να γινωσκαι τον αληθινον Θεον, &c. To know thee only so be true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent*. But he puts the Comma after the Particle *μονον* (only), and so corrupts the Sense by misplacing the Point; a trick which certainly none but a Scholar could have thought on. Thus we find *Gregory the Great* openly asserting, That whoever should call himself Universal Bishop, was Antichrist; but the succeeding Bishops of *Rome* disputed the contrary, and arrogated to themselves the Title.

I might likewise urge the Feuds of the *Franciscans* and *Dominicans*, and other Orders of the Church of *Rome*, to prove that all Quarrellings and jangling Disputes about Matters of Religion, have in all Ages been broach'd by Men of Learning. But to come nearer home; would it not be very absurd, to imagin that such a silly fancy as *Quakerism* could ever have been heard of, or so long upheld among us, if some such Man as *Penn*, who is thought no great stranger in a College of Fame, had not at first insinuated it into some poor ignorant People; who were not able to resist his Logick, or it may be, were more taken up in their worldly Employments, than the Study of Holy Scriptures? And indeed it is not probable; that

that one who is better skill'd in the management of a Plough, than a Logical Argument, should be able to define in Matters of Faith and Doctrin. It may be sooner prov'd that the principal Authors and Abettors of most of our Divisions, came from *Rome*, than that they sprung from ignorant People reading the Scriptures. And if you please to peruse these Papers, you'll find, that the Church of *Rome* in that Council, had other Ends in denying the Scriptures to the Common People, than the Suppressing of Sectaries, as they pretended. I come therefore to the business.

I propos'd to your Consideration, the Duty incumbent on every Christian to read and understand the Holy Scriptures. This I present to your Meditation in the first place, as Preparatory to that which is to follow : It being my intent, in this Undertaking, to have to do with nothing but Scripture Quotations. And so I begin.

Deut. 6. 6— *And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thy house, and on thy gates.*— The words were spoken to the whole Congregation of *Israel*, and need not be explain'd.

Deut. 17. 18.— *And it shall be when the king of Israel sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this Law in a book, out of that which is before the Priests the Levites ; and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life, &c.*— Where give me leave to take Notice, That it being impossible to keep the Scriptures from the Eye of the more Ingenious Gentry,

try, they have been furnished with a Vulgar Latin Translation of the Bible, which they call (though falsely enough) St. *Jerome's*; and lest the Corruptions, wherewith they had (prudently) loaded it, should be discovered, Pope *Sixtus* the V. in the Year 1578, published a *Greek* Copy, purposely forg'd by Cardinal *Carapha*, to make Men believe, That the *Latin* was agreeable to the Original.

Josb. 1. 8.—*This Book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do all that is written therein—* This is the Psalmist's Character of a Good Man, *Psal.* 1. 2. *His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night.* This was the Commendation of *Apollos*, *Acts* 18. 24. *That he was not only an eloquent Man, but mighty in the Scriptures :* And this was the Confidence of the Apostle concerning the *Romans*, *Rom.* 15. After he had told them, verse 4. *That whatever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope ;* At the 14. Verse he concludes, *And I my self also am perswaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to admonish one another.*

Col. 3. 16.—*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, &c.—* And *Ch.* 4. 16. *When this epistle is read amongst you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that ye likewise read the Epistle from Laodicea.* Parallel to which is his Command to the *Thessalonians*, 1 *Epist.* 5. 27. *I charge you by the Lord, that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren.*— And indeed it would be some Comfort, if they of the Church of *Rome* could but have the Gospel read in the Congregation, purely and without Adulteration, in a
Tongue

Tongue understood by the Common People. This would be much more to Edification than a few Stories out of the Golden Legend, or the History of S. George's killing the Dragon ; which I assure you, Madam, is a part of the Service of his Day, and in their Prayer to him they solemnly commemorate this Act of his, as if it were as True as the Gospel. But,

Lastly, S. Peter, speaking of the Voice from Heaven, *This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased ; says, We have also a more sure word of prophecy, wherunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a Light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts : knowing this first, That no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation, 2 Pet. 1. 19, 20.* I give you both Verses, because I know some Men would be apt to object the last to the first : But we may observe, That if S. Peter does condemn the Private Interpretation of Scriptures, he does not condemn the Private Reading of them, but says, *That all men will do well, if they take good heed to them, as to a more sure word than a voice from heaven.*

And thus, Madam, I think it sufficiently appears, That it is the necessary Duty of every Christian to Read, and be well acquainted with the Scriptures, they being the pillar and ground of truth, and the power of God unto salvation.

But, if after all, it is objected, as I suppose it will, That the Scriptures are dark, and hard to be understood ; be pleased to consider with me these few Texts.

Deut 30. 11.—*This commandment which I command thee this day, is not hid from thee, neither is it far off ; it is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us that we may hear it and do it ? neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that*

we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.—

Psal. 119. 130.—The entrance of thy words giveth light: It giveth understanding to the simple.

Prov. 14. 6.—A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not; but knowledge is easie to him that understandeth.—I take these to be sufficient indications of the Plainness and Intelligibleness of the Law. But we have God's own Word, if he may be believed, That the Gospel should be much more easie to be understood.

Jer. 31. 33.—But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law into their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord.—And that the Understanding of the Scriptures is not reserved for the more Learned of Mankind only, is plain from our Saviours own Words, *Matth. 11. 25.* I thank thee, O father, Lord, of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto Babes: Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. And when his Disciples asked him, Why he spake to the Jews in parables, he answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given, *Matth. 13. 11.* And we know that his Disciples were, for the most part Poor, Ignorant, Unlearned; and among the Jews came very often the Scribes, Pharisees and great Doctors. All that I shall add, at present, to compleat this Subject, is, That Ignorance in the Scriptures is very Dangerous.

1. Because it is generally the Cause of Mens committing all manner of sins.

Isai, 1. 3.—*The ox knoweth his owner, and the Ass his masters crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.*—God Almighty had been so Gracious to them, as to give them his Law first, for them to read, and the Prophets afterwards to explain it, that they might know and understand his Will therein; but they would neither read the one, nor give ear to the other. And this, without doubt, was the cause of God's crying out, *How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet? for my people is foolish, they have not known me, they are sottish children, and they have no understanding; they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge,* Jer. 4. 21. and Chap. 5. 21. Hear now this, O foolish people, and without Understanding, which have eyes and see not, ears and hear not. Because they would neither read the Law, nor give Ear to the Prophets, therefore they were justly called *Sottish Children, a foolish people, and without understanding*; therefore they were *wise to do evil, but not to do good*. For it is most certain, The Devil will be sure to make his best of Ignorance, and use his utmost endeavour to keep Men in it; because the more Light Men have, the more Work they can do, and the better they are informed, the better they will act here, and so he will be like to lose their Company hereafter. I think, then, that *S. Austin's tolle, lege,* will be good Advice to all that are willing to live Virtuous Lives; and as *Luther's* advice to Governours, was to read the Books of the Kings, for their Information how to Rule well; so, that all Men would read the Holy Scriptures in general, would be good Counsel, because they afford the best Instructions for living well.

2. Ignorance in the Scriptures is dangerous, because it is the greatest Reason of Mens running into all sorts of Errors.

When the Sadducees proposed to our Saviour the Business of the Woman that had had seven Husbands, asking him, *whose wife she should be at the resurrection?* falsely supposing, If there ever would be a Resurrection, there would also be Marrying and giving in Marriage at the Resurrection; Jesus answered and said unto them, *Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures.* And here, Madam, I might take notice of the Subtlety of the Church of Rome, in denying the Scriptures to the Laity, because maintaining so many Errors so directly contrary to Scriptures, that any discerning Eye must needs discover them: Such are Purgatory, Pope's Pardons, Adoration of Images, praying to Saints and Angels, and the like. But our Lord said of the Pharisees, *Matth. 15. 14. Let them alone; they are blind leaders of the blind: And if the blind lead the blind both shall fall into the ditch.* I shall say nothing therefore to these, at present, but proceed,

3. To shew, That Ignorance in the Scriptures is very Dangerous, because as it is the cause of Sin and Error, so by Sin and Error, it must consequently be the cause of Destruction.

Isay 5. 13.—Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge; and their honourable Men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst. Therefore hell hath enlarged her self, and opened her mouth without measure; and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth shall descend into it.

Psalms 95. 10.—Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their hearts, and they have not known my ways: Unto whom, therefore, I swear in my wrath, that they should not enter into my rest.

Prov. 1. 24.—Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded; but ye have

have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirl-wind, when distress and anguish come upon you: Then shall ye call upon me, but I will not answer, ye shall seek me, but ye shall not find me; for that ye hated knowledge, and did not chuse the fear of the Lord.——But to come a little nearer home; Christ

Jesus has brought Life and Immortality to Light by the Gospel: But this, says he, *is the condemnation*, by way of Eminence, *That light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil: For every one that doth evil hateth the light, neither cometh he to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd; but he that does truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God, Joh. 3.*

19. And surely, Madam, If they that deny us the Scriptures, had not something to be ashamed of, they would not shew themselves so much concerned to keep People in Darkness. It must needs be a Device of the Devil, to keep Men in Ignorance, that they might be damned; according to the Apostle, 2 Cor. 4. 3. *If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; In whom the God of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine upon them. But we know that Christ will one day be revealed in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Thessal. 1. 8.* If it is objected, That this Text speaks of Heathen Persecutors; we may answer, That those Christians, who are not acquainted with, and consequently, not obedient to the Gospel of Christ, are worse than Heathens. I beseech you, Madam, to consider, If it was through Ignorance of the Scriptures, the Jews cruci-
fied

fied the Lord of Glory, as the Apostle says it was, 1 Cor. 2. 8. We that are Christians, had best take heed, That we do not through Ignorance crucifie him again. And if it was a Shame for the *Corinthians* not to know the Scriptures, in the very dawning and twilight of Christianity, 1 Cor. 15. 34, what an abominable Shame must it needs be, for us, after almost seventeen hundred Years, to know no more, or it may be, not so much?

To conclude this Point: The Apostle dedicates his First *Epistle* to the *Corinthians*, *To All that in Every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord*. And what he should do so for, unless he intended it should be read by All, I can't imagin. If he intended it only for the Fathers of that Church, he might in fewer words, and consequently with less trouble, have said, *To the Elders of the Church at Corinth*; or else directed it to the Bishop of that Church only. But he knew the Scriptures were able to make Men *wise unto salvation*, and therefore would have all Men read them. And our blessed Saviour knew that the Jews thought they had Eternal Life in the Scriptures, therefore he bids 'em *Search* them, *Joh. 5. 39*. The Injunction is the same upon Christians also. And then certainly, if the Captain and Author of our Salvation bids us *Search*, we may, notwithstanding the Insinuations of some bold Men to the contrary. By what Rule else should we try the Spirits, whether they be of God, as *St. John* adviseth us, 1 *Ep. 4. 1*. if not by the Rule of God's Word? Upon this account therefore, among others, we are bound to read, search, and be well acquainted with the Scriptures. I presume then, after all that has been produc'd to prove this first Position, what the Evangelist says of the *Revelations*, Chap. 1. 3. may on good grounds be attributed to the rest of the Sacred Writings; *Blessed is he that readerh, and they that*

that bear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein.

And now, Madam, having made good from Scripture Testimonies, the Necessity of being acquainted with the Scriptures ; though I have already gone beyond the ordinary bounds of an Epistle, yet I crave leave to trespass a little farther on your Patience, in giving you a cursory view of some of the Principal Doctrins of the Church of Rome, and demonstrating how contrary they are to the Word of Truth. In order to which, I shall with all possible brevity enquire,

I. Whether any Man can do more than he ought to do ?

II. Whether any Man by his own Works can merit Heaven ?

III. To whom it belongeth to Forgive Sins ?

IV. Whether the Scriptures warrant Worshipping of Images, or Praying to Saints and Angels ?

V. Whether there is any such Place as Purgatory ?

VI. Whether the Mass is a Sacrifice for Quick and Dead ?

VII. Whether the Doctrin of Transubstantiation can be maintain'd by Scripture ?

The first Enquiry must be, whether any Man can do more than he ought to do ? Where we are to consider, That though a Man, as a Christian, is in the state of
Grace:

Grace, yet he is not in the state of Innocence, nor can be, till he arrives at the state of Glory, where all Infirmities will be done away. For as he is Flesh and Blood, liable to be tempted to evil, and apt to commit it, he must expect to meet with Afflictions and Crosses from the World without, and the Suggestions and Temptations of the Devil from within: And being naturally more prone to Evil than Good, I think it a hard thing to say, That 'tis in his power to do more Good than is requir'd he should do, and a harder to prove it.

Under the Law, Men were not able to keep the Law perfectly, nor to walk in the Commandments of God as they ought. For *Moses* himself, who took them from God's mouth, and gave them to the *Israelites*, err'd in so much, that he must not enter the *promised Land*. That Text, *Josb. 11. 15.* has been objected by some Gentlemen of the Church of *Rome*, but plainly to no purpose. For any one may see, that *Josbua's* keeping the Commandments, was only his doing those things he was commanded to do, in order to establish the *Israelites* in the Inheritance of the Land of *Canaan*. And we find the same *Josbua* in another place asserting the impossibility of serving God, *Josb. 24. 19.* at least he did not believe Men could do more.

It may be objected, That the light of the Gospel is much clearer than that of the Law, and the burthen easier to be born, &c. But for all that, 'tis certain the Gospel requires as full and perfect Obedience as ever the Law did. Nay, it proceeds farther; for under the Law Men thought it no great Crime to murder their Neighbour in his good Name, so they let his Body alone: They also thought it no Sin to Lust after a Woman, provided they did not come to Action. But under the Gospel our Saviour tells us the contrary *Ye have heard, that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall*

shall kill, shall be in danger of the Judgment. But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his Brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the Judgment ; and whosoever shall say unto his Brother, Racha, shall be in danger of the Council : but whosoever shall say, Thou Fool, shall be in danger of Hell Fire. Again, Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit Adultery. But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a Woman, to lust after her, hath committed Adultery with her already in his heart, Matth. 5. 21, 22, 27, 28. So that we may see, though the Law was such a yoke as neither we nor our Fore-fathers were able to bear, Act. 15. 10. yet the Yoke of the Gospel is not so light as to be run away with. As easie as it is, 'tis very irksome to Flesh and Blood ; yet 'tis what we must bear so long as we live, and then it is God's mere Mercy, if the heavier yoke of Everlasting Misery is not laid on us instead of it.

If Man has Free-will to do good as well as evil, yet, I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing : for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not. For the good that I would, I do not ; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. (And on the contrary, if I do that good I would, it is no more I that do it, but the grace of God that is in me, 1 Cor. 15. 18.) I find then a Law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the Law of God, after the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members, says the Apostle, Rom. 7. 18. And he at last concludes, So then with the mind I myself serve the Law of God ; but with the flesh the law of sin. To which we may add

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what the same Apostle says, 1 Cor. 2. 14. *But the natural man (that is, flesh and blood) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* And then certainly our Free-will can do us little good, towards making us do more than we should, when by reason of the stubbornness of our Flesh, we can't do what we would. But the Apostle tells us, *That we are not able to do any thing of our selves, but 'tis God that worketh in us both to will and do after his good pleasure,* Phil. 2. 13. And our Saviour himself says, *That no man can come unto him, unless the Father draw him,* Joh. 6. 44. Therefore I think it strange that a Man should be able to do more than he can: 'Tis a Contradiction. Certainly he that made us, can tell best what we can do: And he says, *That the heart of man is only evil continually,* Gen. 6. 5. & 8. 21. If then we are naturally more prone to do evil than good, how is it possible for us to be better than we should be? And if under the Gospel we must observe every Punctilio so strictly, as not to be angry with our Neighbour, nor to look on a Woman to lust after her, &c. how are we able to do all that's required of us? The Apostle St. James goes a step farther; *If ye fulfil the Royal Law, according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convicted of the Law as Transgressors,* Jam. 2. 9. To have respect to Persons in civil Conversation, one would think a small matter, to make one guilty of the breach of the Law; but so it is. And our Saviour goes farther yet, *Matth. 5. 43. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour, and hate thine Enemy: But I say unto you, Love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you,*
and

and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you. This is a hard lesson, and not agreeable to Flesh and Blood; yet 'tis made the condition of becoming the Children of our Father which is in Heaven.

From what has been said, we may gather, That if any Man can do what he is required to do, he cannot do more. And if, as we are told, *Jam. 3. 2. In many things we offend all.* And if a *just man falleth seven times a day*, *Prov. 24. 16.* Who can boast of being righteous over much? Nay, where is there a Man so good, as that he may *number his offences*? Holy David could not, though *a man after God's own heart.* We read of but one man, throughout the whole Book of God, who was *without sin*, and that was the man *Christ Jesus*; yet it was never said of him, that he did more than fulfil the Will of his Father. And for us, born in sin, and conceived in corruption, to say we can do more! — I cannot express the Folly and Nonsense of it. By so doing, we should make God our Debtor, who is Debtor to no Man. If they of the Church of *Rome* can brag of any works of Supererogation, they are such as these; The hallowing Daggers for the cutting off Princes that are not for their turn: The sacrificing all they please to call Hereticks: The denying the Scriptures in a tongue understood by the Vulgar: And several others which might be named, concerning which they may indeed be ask'd, Who hath required these things at your hands? But we of the Church of *England* know of nothing to be done, more than what is our duty to do. We know the Preachers Doctrine was, *Whatsoever thy hand findeth for thee to do, do it with thy might*, *Eccl. 9. 10.* And our Lord and Master's Advice is, *when we have done all we can*, to acknowledge our selves

but unprofitable Servants; having done only what *was our duty to do*, Luk. 17. 10. For no Man lives and sins not. If therefore we say that we have no sin, we deceive our selves, and the truth is not in us, 1 Joh. 1. 8. Nay, we make God a Liar, who hath said, *there is not one that doth good*, Psal 14. 1, 3. In a word, if there is a Devil to tempt, we are still in danger of sinning. And if every thought will be brought in to Judgment, who can call himself Innocent? 'Tis my opinion, that instead of thinking we can do more than our Duty; Every Man should rather repent of the sins, as well of Omission, as Commission he is daily guilty of; and with the Psalmist cry out, *Who can understand his Errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults*, Psal. 19. 12. For our Saviour's censure on the most righteous, is, *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*, Luk. 13. 3, 5. To conclude this first *Quere*; if it were possible for any Man to over-do his Duty, I would ask any reasonable Man, Whether, when he has done more than he ought to have done, he would not commit a great sin in thinking so, and a greater in saying so? If the Affirmative holds good, then the poor Man has still some part of his Duty to perform, *viz.* to repent of that sin; and so *in infinitum*.

II. The second Enquiry proposed, was, Whether a Man by his own Works can merit Heaven?

Here, Madam, be pleased to consider with me these few following Texts.

Deut. 9. 4.— *Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the Lord thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this Land; but for the wickedness of these nations,*

tions, &c.—The Land of *Canaan*, of which this Text speaks, is generally looked on as a Type of Heaven : And then this is plain enough.

Job 9. 30.—*If I wash my self with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean ; yet thou shalt plunge me in the ditch, and my own cloaths shall abhor me, &c.* And *Chap. 15. 14.*—*What is man, that he should be clean ? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous ?* Verse 16. *How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water ?*—All spoken by one, whose Fellow was not to be found upon the Face of the Earth for Vertue ; and therefore if any could boast, he might.

Psal. 130. 3.—*If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who should stand ? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.*—And *Psal. 143. 2.*—*Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.*

Isai. 53. 6.—*All we like sheep have gone astray ; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.*—And *Chap. 64. 6.*—*But we are all as unclean things ; and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and we do all fade as a leaf, and our iniquity like the wind hath taken us away.*

Rom. 3. 10.—*As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one ; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God ; they are all gone out of the way, they are altogether become unprofitable, there is none that doth good, no not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre, with their tongues they have used deceit, the poison of asps is under their lips, whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness ; their feet are swift to shed blood, destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known ; there is no fear of God before their eyes.*—All this is spoken of all Mankind in general, both Jews and Gentiles ;

Gentiles; and if it be true, what can any Man find in himself to challenge Heaven as his due?

Rom. 6. 23. — Eternal Life is called, *The gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.* — Now if Eternal Life be a Gift, I would fain know how a Gift can be Merited? And if it be for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord, I would know whether the same Gift can be said to be Merited by him for us, and by us for our selves too? if this is affirmed, then something to this purpose must follow, That the Passion and Death of Christ are Significant, and partly not, because a Man, as a Christian at least, may Merit, and consequently enjoy Heaven, by his own Works, without the Application of Christs Merits; which would be very Absurd, to say no worse of it: But if it be denied, then the Consequence will be this, That let a Man merit what he will, he must be beholding to the Merits of Christ for his Admission into Heaven, at last.

2 Cor. 4. 4. — *For I know nothing by my self, yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord.* — Let us then suppose a Man to be in the Apostles Case, in my Opinion such a Man could have but little Comfort from his own Merits, if he being so perfect as not to know any evil by himself, should not for all that be certain of his Justification. I would ask one of these Meritorious Gentlemen, in the Words of the Apostle, at the seventh Verse of the same Chapter; *Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?*

Eph. 2. 8. — *For by grace ye are saved, through Faith; and that not of your selves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast.*

2 Tim. 1. 9.—Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace; which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

Tit. 3. 5.—Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, &c. And many more you will meet with in reading; but by these few you may judge how available our works, even the very best we can do, are to salvation.

Before I leave this Point, I presume it will not be impertinent, if I add something, in this Place, touching Justification by Faith: In which, for brevity sake, I shall do little more than set down the most pertinent Texts of Scripture, and leave the rest to your Ingenuity. And in the first place,

Gen. 15. 6.—Abraham believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness.

Habak. 2. 4.—Behold, his soul which is lifted up, is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his Faith.

Joh. 1. 12.—But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. And Chap. 3. 16. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.—

When our Saviour went to raise the Ruler of the Synagogue's Daughter, he bid him, only believe, Mark; 5. 36.

Acts 10. 23.—To him give all the Prophets witness. That through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins. And Chap. 16. 31. When the Keeper of the Prison, wherein Paul and Silas were, asked them, What he should do to be saved, their Answer was, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

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Rom. 3. 23.—For we have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? it is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay, but by the law of Faith; therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law.—If you consider this Quotation throughly, you will find it as compleat to the purpose, as can be desired. However, I'll present you with a few more.

Rom. 4. 1.—What shall we say then, that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? no, for if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God; for what say the Scriptures? Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness: And to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.—Where, by the way, the Word (*ungodly*) in this Text, must not be taken to mean Impenitent Sinners, for they, as such, can have no Right to Justification; but as no man is Upright in the Sight of God, he is said, in the Best of Men, to justify ungodly, freely by his grace, in the foregoing Chapter, Verse 23, 24: So that this makes doubly for my Purpose, shewing; first, That Justification comes by Faith; and also, That those that are Justified, being Sinners before God, cannot with Reason boast of the Merit of Works.

Rom. 5. 1.—Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. And Chap. 10. 8. The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart;

heart; that is the word of faith which we preach, That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

Gal. 2. 16. 21.—Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law, for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. I do not frustrate the grace of God; for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. And Chap. 3. 11.—And the Scripture foreseeing that God would Justifie the Heathen through Faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident, for the just shall live by faith: For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth any thing; but faith which worketh by love.—Let that Text, Eph. 2. 8. above cited, sum up all; For by grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not of your selves, it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast. Neither have I been at all this Pains, from a solifidian Principle, to endeavour to seclude Good Works from being the Fruits of a lively Faith: For so I should frustrate the Grace of God. And I presume, Madam, you know my Opinion better than to think so; my Intent was only to shew, How Erronious it is to suppose Merit from Works, especially according to the Doctrin of the Church of Rome, That Men may Merit for themselves and others. To conclude this Point, give me leave to present to your Meditation the Heinousness of Original Sin only, and then I'll leave you to Judge, if, for all that, and the many Actual Sins we daily commit, God will be gracious to us, and receive us unto his Glory, how little Reason we

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have to boast of that *Nothing* we have done to Merit his Favour.

Gen. 6. 5.—*And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually; and it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and he grieved him at his heart: And the Lord said, I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.*—I think no man can deny Original Sin to be the Cause of all this; and then, how Heinous a thing that is, which is the Cause of so much Displeasure in God, I submit to any person to Judge. You will read to the same Purpose, Verse 11, 12, 13.

Job 14. 4.—*Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.* For, Psal. 51. 5. *Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.* Prov. 20. 9. *Who then can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?* Eccl. 7. 29. *For lo, this only have I found, That God made man upright at first, but since they have fallen away from that Upright State, they have sought out many Inventions.*

Jer. 17. 9.—*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?* For, Matth. 15. 19. *Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false-witness, blasphemies, and all things that defile a man.* And the Reason of all this is, Because, Job. 3. 6. *That which is born of the flesh, is flesh.* Man, as he is Flesh and Blood, is naturally fleshly minded. Rom. 7. 14. *For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin; for that which I do, I allow not, for what I would, that do I not, but what I hate, that I do.* And so, Eph. 2. 3. *All are by nature the children of wrath.*

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Jam. 1, 15.— Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin ; and when 'tis finished, bringeth forth death.

Our first Parents lusted after the forbidden Fruit, and that brought forth the sin of breaking the Commandment ; and that sin brought forth Death.

And *Rom. 5, 12.* As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; so death passed upon all men, for that all, in him, have sinned.

Wherefore if all are guilty of Original Sin, and that guilt makes us Children of Wrath ; and consequently Heirs of Damnation, I don't see any reason we have to boast of our righteousness, but rather we have too much cause to bewail our wretchedness, and to pray continually against the inevitable misery we are liable to undergo, for all the good works we have done, or can do, unless God be more merciful to the best of us, than we deserve.

And though by Baptism the guilt of Original Sin is washed away ; yet 'tis more than probable, that the first Actual Sin brings it again. For, as he that by amendment of life turns to God, his former sins shall not be remembered ; so, he that returns from the Service of God, his righteousness shall be blotted out and forgotten, and all his former iniquities shall testify against him. To conclude ; from what has been produced, this at present occurs to our Observation ; That though there is no such thing in truth, as a Solidian Justice, but every Man that will be saved, must be endued with a Faith that works by Love ; yet after all we can do, we must expect Salvation by Faith in Christ's Blood, and not from our own worthiness.

III. The Third Enquiry propos'd, was, To whom it belongs to Forgive Sins ?

Psal. 3, 8.— Salvation belongeth to the Lord.

49, 7.— None of them can by any means redeem his brother,

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nor give to God a ransom for him. For the redemption of their soul is precious.—— And 37. 39. *The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord.* Therefore, 130. 7. *Let Israel hope in the Lord.*—— It was the Psalmists opinion, That it belonged to God to Forgive Sins, and therefore, *Psal. 51. 14.* he thus addresses himself to him; *Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation.* And thus God affirms of Himself, *Isai. 43. 11.* *I, even I am the Lord; and beside me there is no Saviour.* *I, even I am he that blottereth out thy transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins.* where we may take notice, That it belongs to God to Forgive Sins; and also, That he Forgives them for his own sake, which takes off all Merit by Works.

Dan. 9. 9.—— *To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses.*—— It was the constant Opinion of the Jews: For when our Saviour said to the Sick of the Palsie, *Man, thy sins are forgiven thee;* the Jews, not believing him to be God as well as Man, accus'd him of Blasphemy, saying, *Who can forgive sins but God only?* *Luk. 5. 21.* So our Lord himself, though John Baptist call'd him *the Lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world,* *Joh. 1. 29.* directs us to ask God to forgive our sins, *Mat. 6. 12.* For at *Vers. 14.* *'Tis our heavenly Father that must forgive us.* And thus the Apostle tells the Colossians, *That they being dead in their sins, and the uncircumcision of their flesh, God had quickened them, and forgiven them all trespasses,* *Col. 2. 13.* From all which it appears plainly enough, That Forgiveness of Sin, belongs only to God.

The consequence of this, is, That if it belongs to God only to Forgive Sins, then Confession of Sins is due to him alone.

A Member of the Church of Rome, is in danger of passing immediately into Hell, if he dies without having confes'd

confess'd his Sins to a Priest : So absolutely necessary do they teach Auricular Confession to be in order to Salvation. But, if we may examin it a little, I am apt to think, it will appear much like the rest.

Psal. 32. 5.—*I acknowledged my sins unto thee, and my iniquity have I not hid : I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.*— The Psalmist was absolv'd without Auricular Confession, only by acknowledging his Sins to God.

1 King. 8. 47.—*Tet if they shall bethink themselves in the Land whether they were carried Captives, and repent and make supplication to thee in the Land of them that carried them Captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness, &c.*— Here is no Confession to a Priest mentioned.

Ezra 9. 5.—*And at the evening sacrifice, I rose up from my heaviness, and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the Lord my God, and said, O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God, &c.*

Psal. 41. 4.—*I said, Lord be merciful unto me, and heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee.* Hence Confession of Sin is due to him against whom we have sinned. And then 'tis due Relatively to our Neighbour, if we have done him any injury : But Properly to God, according to the Psalmist, *Psal. 51. 4.* *Against thee only have I sinned, &c.* when he had committed Adultery with Bathsheba, and caused her Husband to be slain.

Dan. 9. 15.—*And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the Land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten the renown, as at this day ; we have sinned, we have done wickedly. Therefore, Jer. 14. 20.* *We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our Fathers ; for we have sinned against thee.*— In a word ; I should never have done, if I should quote

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all the Texts to prove Confession of Sins only due to God. And therefore, because you will meet with them in reading, I shall at present only refer you to the Sixth Chapter of *St. Matthew's* Gospel, to what our Saviour says there of Prayer and Fasting: For Repentance and Confession being inherent parts of Prayer and Fasting, I think they may be included in the same Advice; which I need not have inserted, by reason of your frequent using the *Lords Prayer*, in which 'tis evident.

After all, there is not one Text, as I know of, that by any good Consequence, makes Confession to a Priest so absolutely Necessary, as the Doctrin of the Church of *Rome* does: If any will do it, and do it sincerely, we do not deny it to be Good. But after 'tis done, without a Private Confession to God, it must needs be Imperfect; for it is God that knows our Hearts better than we do our selves, and we are guilty of many Sins we know not of, as the Psalmist professes: Wherefore we should cry out with him, *Psal. 19. 12. Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.* The consequence of all is, That all Men ought to Confess their Sins to God, against whom only they have sinned, as to one that has the sole Power to forgive them. Not that I desire, in the least, to diminish the Power of the Keys given to the Church; for I own, That our Blessed Lord gave Power and Authority to his Ministers, to declare and pronounce to his People, being Penitent, the Absolution and Remission of their Sins, in his Name: But, to confine that Power to the Church of *Rome* only; and to say, All that Die out of her Communion are certainly Damn'd for want of it, and to make the Bishop of *Rome* joynt-Competitor with Christ in the Business, is against the Grain, and will not digest in my Stomach, whatever it may do in other Mens.

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I should waſt too much Time and Paper, If I ſhould examine the Groſs Nonſenſical Conſequences of Believing the Biſhop of *Rome* able to Forgive Sins, which have from thence been impoſed upon the greater part of the Church of *Rome*, the Ignorant ſort of People. That the Pope can at once Forgive a Man all the Sins he ever has committed, or ever ſhall be guilty of ; that he can thruſt a Man into Heaven, for as long a Time as he pleaſes, where he ſhall lie undiscovered by the all-ſeeing Eye of God, and at the end of that Term be kicked into Hell ; that he can forgive the Sins of all that are in the Communion of the *Roman* Church, of all Chriſtians, nay, if he pleaſes, of the whole World at once. It has been acknowledged by many of their own Writers on this Subject, who have been guilty of the leaſt Extravagance, That the Pope has Power, if he will, at one Maſs, to free all the Souls out of Purgatory. If this were true, King *James* the Firſt's Inference on the Poſition, was, with Abnegation of the Popes Charity, and Admiration of his unparallel'd Cruelty, That, being granted to have a Power ſo to do, he does not apply his Will to it. But I know, Madam, you are no Friend to ſuch Fancies ; therefore I ſhall appeal no further than to your own Ingenuity, to judge from what has been produced, Who has the Supreme and only Power to forgive Sins, to whom Confeſſion properly is due, and in whoſe Name only Abſolution ought to be Pronounced. And ſo proceed.

IV. The Fourth Enquiry propoſed, was, Whether the Scriptures warrant the Worſhiping of Images, or Praying to Saints and Angels ?

The Second Commandment is ſo much to our Purpoſe, that they of the Church of *Rome* have prudently left it out of the Decalogue, and to make up the number, they

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cut the Tenth into two Parts ; so the Church of Rome's Decalogue is this,

- I. *Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.*
- II. *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, &c.*
- III. *Remember that thou keepest holy the Sabbath-day, &c.*
- IV. *Honour thy Father and thy Mother, &c.*
- V. *Thou shalt do no Murther.*
- VI. *Thou shalt not commit Adultery.*
- VII. *Thou shalt not Steal.*
- VIII. *Thou shalt not bear false Witness against thy Neighbour.*
- IX. *Thou shalt not covet thy Neighbours Wife.*
- X. *Thou shalt not covet thy Neighbours House, &c.*

So that the generality of the People of the Church of Rome know of no such thing in Being, as the tedious Harangue against Images, by us called the Second Commandment. However, there are Texts enough besides, both in the Old and New Testaments, clearly against them ; of which I will only give you a few of the chief.

Judges 13. 15——*And Manoah said unto the Angel of the Lord, I pray thee, let us detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid for thee. And the angel of the Lord said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread; and if thou wilt offer a Burnt-offering, thou must offer it unto the Lord. And Manoah said unto the angel of the Lord, What is thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass, we may do thee honour? And the angel of the Lord said unto him, Why askest thou after my name, seeing it is secret?—The Angel would not tell his Name, because Manoah should honour God only.*

○ *Psal. 29. 2.*—Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his Name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. For *Isai. 42. 8.* I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another; neither my praise to graven Images.—And I am certain there is not one Text to the contrary; but many to the same purpose.

Acts 10. 25.—And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up, I myself also am a man. And *Chap. 14. Vers. 11.*—When the People saw what Paul had done, they lift up their voices, saying, in the speech of Lycaonia, The Gods are come down to us in the likeness of Men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius; because he was the chief Speaker. Then the Priest of Jupiter, which was before their City; brought Oxen and Garlands unto the Gates, and would have done Sacrifice with the People. Which when the Apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their Clothes, and ran in among the People, crying out, and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? we also are men of like Passions with you, &c. —I am apt to believe these things were done and suffer'd by the Providence of God, on purpose to shew, that as they were not to be worshipp'd while they were on the Earth, to neither shou'd we pay Divine Honours to 'em now they are in Heaven. But the Apostle to the *Corinthians* is very express to the purpose.

1 Cor. 1. 13.—Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul? *Chap. 3. 4.*—Who then is Paul? and who is Apollos, but Ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.—Now Judge, Madam, what a horrid thing it must needs be to make Images and Pictures of the Saints whereby to Worship 'em, if it was so great a Crime to esteem one of 'em before another while they were on Earth. But as we are not to Wor-

ship the Saints, so neither must we pay such honour to Angels.

Col. 2. 18.—*Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility, and worshipping of Angels, &c.*

Rev. 19. 10. & 22. 9.—*And I fell at his feet and worshipped him, and he said unto me, see thou do it not : I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy Brethren that have the Testimony of Jesus : Worship God, &c.*—And certainly, if we must not Worship an Angel if we should see him, I know not which way it can be prov'd lawful to intrude into those things which we have not seen, as the Apostle says of them that Worship Angels, Col. 2. 18. I can find no Text of Scripture for it; but you see, Madam, how many I have produc'd against it. And I believe we shall see as little reason to pray to Saints and Angels, as to worship 'em.

Isai. 63. 16.— *Doubtless thou art our Father, tho' Abraham be ignorant of us, and tho' Israel acknowledge us not ; thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer, thy Name is from Everlasting.*—Where be pleas'd to observe, that, if it was lawful to pray to, and in so doing to worship Saints departed, why might not the *Israelites* have made them Images of *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, and pray'd to them to help 'em in time of trouble; or, to put the best face upon it, that they would pray to God for their own Offspring on Earth, as well as they of the Church of *Rome* have their Representatives of, and Prayers to their Saints; who for the most part, we are apt to believe, are only titular ones? They knew this would be to no purpose, for *Abraham* was ignorant of 'em, and *Israel* acknowledged them not. But,

Jer. 15. 1.—*Then said the Lord unto me, Tho' Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet, my mind could not be toward this People.*—That is, If it was possible for *Moses* and *Samuel*, whose Prayers were so prevalent with me when they liv'd on Earth, to interceed for this People now, yet my Mind could not be toward them. Thus then appears the Vanity of invoking Saints departed, in that *the Dead know nothing,*
neither

neither have they any more a portion for ever of any thing that is done under the Sun, Eccl. 9. 5, 6. But whether Angels and Saints departed, are acquainted with our Condition, or can hear our Prayers, is not much to the purpose; 'tis enough to tell you, that, supposing they are endued with such Faculties, our Worshipping them wou'd detract from the Honour of God, which he has said he will not give to another: and our invoking them wou'd make them Mediators and Intercessors, when the Apostle plainly affirms, That *there is but one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus*, 1 Tim. 2. 5.

To conclude this, because I wou'd be as brief as possibly I may, I shall refer you to the Fourth Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, where you'll find, the great Reason that *Moses* gives the Children of *Israel*, why they shou'd not make 'em Images, is, because when they heard the Voice of the Lord from the Mountain, they saw no Similitude; which he urges more than once. And then, what Grounds can they of the Church of *Rome* pretend, for exposing a Picture of him, who always was Invisible? This has been lately acknowledged to be Idolatry, by one that writ more for the Church of *Rome* in this particular, than, as he said afterwards, he intended, tho' all little enough to the purpose: or at least more was added, by some-body else, to what he did; as may be conjectur'd from the variation of the Style: but no matter which. "The Author makes Idolatry of two Sorts; "The first whereof is, the Worshipping any Image or Symbols of false Gods, as the Supreme Deities: and says, If they do not this, then they are innocent of the worst part of Idolatry. The second is, the making, or, as he says, the attempting to make a Similitude of the true God, or uncreated Divine Nature. That, says he, is the other part of Idolatry, and the Scripture knows no more; therefore however Superstitious they may be in their use of Images, yet they cannot be guilty of Idolatry, but upon one of these two accounts, (I suppose he means, the bare

*Reasons for
abrogating
the Test,
p. 128,*

P. 126.

“use of Images in the Worship of God was none, because he
 “says, p. 124, that God was so far from forbidding the use
 “of Images in his Worship, that he wou’d not be Worshipp’d
 “without them.) And he says, that no Man was ever so hardy
 “as to charge either of these two Kinds of Idolatry upon that
 “Church. But, not to enquire whether their Worshipping
 God by an Image, which he seems to Vindicate in another
 place, be the making a Similitude of the true God, or un-
 created Divine Nature; I assure you, Madam, I have seen
 the Ancient of Days pictur’d like an Old Man, with a great
 Beard, by which they represented the Unity of the God-
 head: And in another place, the Trinity of Persons, stand-
 ing on a row in a Sheet held up by two Angels; two of
 the three, viz. The Father and the Holy Ghost, with their
 Backs toward me, to express their Invisibility, tho’ in the
 other Picture I had seen God face to face; and the Son in
 the middle, as the second Persons place, with his face visible.
 Now in my opinion, one or both of these Representations
 must be Idolatry by their own confession. But the present
 Circumstances of the *Roman Church* are such, that if they
 can’t make People believe they Practise no such things as
 these, they’ll do little good on those of the Church of *Eng-
 land*: and ’tis to be hoped they’ll get but little ground that
 way, while there are any left to discover their Forgeries.

No more Authority have they for invoking Saints and
 Angels, than for Worshipping Images. The only President,
 as I know of, in the Primitive Times, was the voluntary
 Humility of the *Gnosticks*, condemn’d by St. Paul himself;
Col. 2. But for these they must have recourse to the Revela-
 tions made to doating Women, and the Visions of mad *Fran-
 ciscans*, and I know not whom—That *Raphael* shou’d be in-
 vocated on a Journey, and against Diseases in general; but
 in particular, *Apollonia* against the Tooth-ach; *Sebastian* and
Roch, against the Plague; St. *Nicholas*, against Tempests;
Michael and St. *George*, against Enemies. From whom, if
 they be invoked particularly, say they, Experience and

Tradition

Tradition have discover'd special help in these Cases. But what is this, but the ancient Heathen Idolatry, reviv'd in the Church of *Rome*? Which is so much the worse there, because of the Profession of Christianity; and Men that pretend to know the true God, blasphemously imagin, or assert against their Consciences, which I think the worse of the two, That help to come from the Creature, which can only come from the Creator. May not we on better Grounds deify our Physicians? But these things they'll venture to deny, tho' they are easily prov'd: that which they chiefly acknowledge in this Point, is their praying to Saints and Angels to pray for them, or as some say, to pray to Christ to interceed for them, it being arrogant Presumption, for Mortals to go to Christ immediately. But this is downright *Gnosticism*; and we of the Church of *England*, have our Saviour's own words for our Encouragement, if they of the Church of *Rome* have not, *Joh. 14. 6, I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh to the Father but by me.* And we know of no other Intercessor in Heaven, but Christ. Therefore I think it a privation of our Christian Liberty, to debar us from Praying to him immediately, on Pretence of too much Presumption in so doing; for he himself invites all that labour and are heavy laden, to come to him, and he will give 'em rest, *Matth. 11. 28.* He does not say, *Come to me* by my Mother, or by St. Michael, or St. Bennet, &c. But, *Come to me*—directly.

5. The Fifth Enquiry must be, *Whether there is any such Place as Purgatory?*

The Doctrines of the Church of *Rome*, as they have been manag'd, are most of 'em so order'd, as to be as suitable and conformable to the temper of Humane Nature as they well may be: as might be made appear, if we had time, in these already spoken to. But above all; the Doctrine of Purgatory, is as obliging and complaisant to Flesh and Blood, as any thing can be. For this takes off all necessity of a strict and restrain'd life; here needs no mortifying our Members
which

which are upon the Earth; as the Apostle's advice was: Men need not be so fearful of pleasing their Appetites, as they should be, if they were to follow the rigid Precepts of our Saviour, or St. Paul. But the *Epicurean* Principle will make a Man happy here, in gratifying the Lusts of the Flesh; and hereafter he shall be happy in Heaven too; if he has but been so frugal as to save a little Money to pay for a Catholick Burial, only undergoing a little Frixation or Roasting by the way. That this is the genuine Explication of the Doctrine of Purgatory, as it is receiv'd and propagated in the *Roman Church*, might be made appear by many good Consequences, if I had time, and it was worth the Pains to consider every Particular. But 'tis done at large already by an Excellent Hand; and the Business of the present Undertaking, is not so much to that, as to Enquire whether there is any such Place as Purgatory or no?

Dr. Stil.
Idol. of the
Church of
Rome.

There are but two Texts in the New Testament that can with any colour be urg'd to this purpose. One is, *1 Pet. 3. 19.* where 'tis said, that Christ *went and Preach'd to the Spirits in Prison.* And the other, *1 Cor. 3. 15.* *If any man's works shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved, yet so, as by fire.* On these two Texts this Doctrine is built. If therefore I can make it plain, that neither of these Texts are to the purpose, I think I shall have little more to do than to deny the Doctrine to be true; forasmuch as in any Matter of Dispute the Affirmative ought to be prov'd before the Negative. I begin then with the first, *1 Pet. 3. 19.*

In the foregoing Verse, the Apostle tells us, that Christ hath once suffer'd for sins, the just for the unjust, (that he might bring us to God) being put to death in the flesh, but quicken'd by the spirit. And then adds, By which also he went and preach'd to the spirits in Prison. From whence most Expositors gather, that what our Saviour is said to do here, he did after his Resurrection: As if the Apostle had said, He was put to Death in the Flesh, but

was

was quicken'd, or rais'd again by the Spirit; and after that, he went by the same Spirit, or Power, that quicken'd him, and Preach'd to the Spirits in Prison. And that the word Prison, here, can't mean Purgatory, will more plainly appear, if we follow the Apostle as he goes on — *By which also he went and Preach'd to the Spirits in Prison; which sometime were Disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the Days of Noah, while the Ark was preparing: wherein few, that is, Eight Persons were saved by Water.* The like Figure whereunto, even Baptism doth also now save us, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, &c. We read, *Gen. 6. 3.* that God said, *My Spirit shall not always strive with Man, for that he also is Flesh: yet his Days shall be an Hundred and Twenty Years.* The Deluge was determin'd for the Sins of the Old World; yet God of his Mercy wou'd give 'em so long time as One Hundred and Twenty Years to Repent in; and sent *Noah* to Preach Repentance, and Threaten Destruction to all that wou'd not amend their Lives. Whence this of the Apostle has been interpreted of Christ's Preaching the Gospel to the *Gentiles*, by his Apostles, after his Resurrection when he had sent his Spirit among 'em. And so, those that wou'd not repent at the Preaching of the Gospel, shou'd one Day perish by Fire, as they of the Old World did by Water, for not Repenting at the Preaching of *Noah*: For as Christ was then reveal'd in a flood of Water, so he will again be revealed in flaming Fire to take Vengeance on them that obey not his Gospel. But they that wou'd repent, and be obedient to his Gospel, shou'd be saved by Baptism, as *Noah* was in the Ark: yet not merely from a Temporal Punishment, but from Everlasting Destruction. Now, to make the Prison here spoken of, Purgatory; is to say, in effect, that those that were destroy'd by the Deluge of the Old World, have remain'd ever since in this Purgatory till our Saviour's Crucifixion, and that in one of the Three Days in which he lay in the Grave,

Grave, he went and Preach'd the Gospel of Repentance to them. But this can't be made deducible from the words of the Apostle, but rather the contrary. For, the word φυλακή which we render, Prison; signifies any kind of Receptacle whatever, a Sheath for a Sword, as well as a Gaol for Prisoners, and as properly the Body of a Man, wherein the Soul is kept, as any thing else: any thing containing is φυλακή, a Prison, in reference to the thing contain'd. So that Christ's Preaching to the Spirits in Prison, here, is nothing else, but either the Preaching of *Noah* to those of the Old World, or of his Apostles to the *Gentiles* of the New, whose Souls were penn'd up in their Bodies, which were exercis'd in Filthy Lusts, as useless as a Sword is while it remains in the Sheath. And this is the sense that the best Expositors put upon the place. *Beza* especially, is very copious, and fully discusses the point, proving that this Prison can in no wise be taken for Purgatory. But the Reverend *Dr. Hammond* has most ingenuously and accurately express'd the Apostles meaning; and therefore with his words I shall conclude; — “ Christ, says he, is an Example of suffering for well-doing, in his Dying for Sins, not his own but ours, he being righteous died for us who were unrighteous, (that when we were Aliens and Enemies to God, he might reconcile us to him, and give us Authority to approach him,) wherein yet for our example and comfort it must be observ'd, that tho' as a Man cloath'd in our Flesh, he was put to Death, and that innocently, to purchase Redemption for us, yet by the power of God in him he was most gloriously rais'd from the Dead, and shall consequently, by raising and rescuing us out of the present Sufferings, and destroying all obdurate Sinners, shew forth wonderful Evidences of Power and Life: The very same in effect that of old he did at the time in which, beyond all others, he shew'd himself in Power and Majesty against his Enemies, but withal in great Mercy and Deliverance to his Obedient Servants that adher'd to him: ”

" him : I mean in the Days of the Old World, when by
 " *Noah*, that Preacher of Righteousness, he gave those treat-
 " able warnings to those that made no use of the Light of
 " Nature in their Hearts, to the Spirits or Souls of those
 " that were then alive before the Flood, which God had gi-
 " ven them with impressions of Good and Evil, but through
 " their customs of Sin were as a Sword put up in a Sheath,
 " laid up in their Bodies unprofitably.——So then, upon
 the whole matter, whether the sence of the Apostle be re-
 ferr'd to our Saviours Preaching, by *Noah*, to them of the
 Old World, or by his Apostles to the *Gentiles* of the New,
 is not much to the purpose ; this is the plain resolution of
 the present Quere, That the word *Prison* here made use of,
 is only a Metaphorical Epithet given to the Body in refe-
 rence to the Soul, a Comparison made of the Soul con-
 fin'd in the Body of a sinful Man, with a Man lock'd up in
 a Prison, And thus when our Saviour, by his Ministers,
 Preaches the Gospel, especially to Unbelievers or Wicked
 Men, he may be said to Preach to Spirits in Prison. From
 what has been said then, I think Purgatory can't be assert-
 ed from the words of *St. Peter*.

Whence we come to consider those of *St. Paul*, *If any*
Man's Work shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss, but he himself
shall be saved, yet so, as by Fire.

The Apostle, *Verse 10*, says, *According to the Grace of*
God which was given to me, as a wise Master-Builder I have
laid the Foundation, and another buildeth thereon : And,
Verse 12. he speaks of Two sorts of Men that build on this
 Foundation ; First, *those that build thereon Gold, Silver and*
Precious-Stones : and Secondly, *those that build thereon*
Wood, Hay and Stubble. Now, says he, *Verse 13,* Every
Man's Work shall be made manifest. For the Day shall de-
clare it, because it shall be reveal'd by Fire, and the Fire
shall try every Man's Work, of what sort it is. And, as he
 goes on, *If any Man's Work shall abide which he hath built*
thereon, he shall receive a Reward. But if any Man's Work
 shall

shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss, &c. Which may be thus explain'd.

There were among the *Corinthians*, when the Apostle writ this Epistle to 'em, two sorts of Preachers; some, who endeavour'd nothing more, than to Preach the pure simplicity of the Gospel, and to feed the Flock of Christ with sound and wholesome Doctrine: And others, who pretended to greater parts and knowledge than other Men; and these with superfluous flourishes and empty glosses endeavour'd to win the Hearts of their Hearers by their worldly wisdom, as the Apostle calls it. As the other studied for the preservation of a good Conscience in the faithful discharge of their Duty, so these made it their chief care to become the Peoples Favourites, by being as complaisant and obliging as they cou'd, and by Indulging 'em in some petty matters, as they call'd 'em, that the Gospel might not seem too heavy a burden to 'em. They wou'd tell the People of Works of Supererogation, some things they might do more than they were commanded to do; and so brought in worshipping of Angels under a pretence of voluntary Humility, intruding into those things which they had not seen, being vainly puffed up with their fleshly minds, as the Apostle testifies, *Col. 2. 18.* And by such little tricks as these they gain'd more and more upon the giddy Affections of the multitude, 'till at last they broke out into that Division which call'd for this Epistle. Things being at this pass, the Apostle thought it high time to think of a way, if possible, to put a stop to those enormities which were so fast breaking into the Church. And to this end, he first mildly reproves the *Corinthians*, for their overmuch curiosity, and affection of Speculation, rather than wholesome Doctrine. And then he proceeds to shew 'em the vanity of such Speculative Preachers, by telling 'em, that he had laid the Foundation, and that no Man cou'd lay another than what was laid already, which was Jesus Christ. Now, says he, *If any Man builds upon this*

*this Foundation, Gold, Silver, Precious-Stones, Wood, Hay, or Stubble? Every Man's Work shall be made manifest. For the Day shall declare it, because it shall be reveal'd by Fire, and the Fire shall try every Man's Work, of what sort it is. And if any Man's Work shall abide, which he hath built upon that Foundation which he had laid, he shall receive a Reward. That is, He that shall approve himself a sincere Preacher of the Gospel, that he has fed the Flock of Christ with sound and profitable Doctrine, he shall in the Day of Trial have this to comfort him against all Temporal Calamities, That he has Acted as a faithful Pastor ought to do, and therefore though Tribulations beset him on all sides, yet he is certain he whom he has serv'd is faithful, and will undoubtedly perform his promise to his faithful Servants, so that in the midst of the greatest Afflictions he's sure to become more than a Conqueror, and as such shall not miss of a most glorious Reward. But, If any Man's Work shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss: That is, He shall in the Day of Trial be convinc'd of the invalidity and unprofitableness of his Preaching, which will cause in him the pains of a guilty Conscience, which commonly attend on those that have been unprofitable in their Stations; and the loss of his former credit, will cause him shame, and a detestation of those vain and empty Opinions, which before he so earnestly defended; and all these together will put him in danger of losing his reward hereafter. Yet notwithstanding all this, tho' his fleshy opinions are consum'd and brought to nothing, if he has been so fortunate as to hold to the Foundation in the main Doctrines of Christianity, he himself may be saved, but 'twill be so hardly, as by Fire. That is, tho' he had been infected with *Gnosticism*, if he did not proceed so far as actually to deny Christ the Foundation, as his Doctrine before was that he might in case of Persecution, yet his not denying him at last, is an Abnegation of that Doctrine as Erroneous, and on that account he might be saved, notwithstanding the unprofitableness of his Preaching otherwise*

simply consider'd, but it wou'd be so hardly, as when one
 with the greatest difficulty frees himself from the fury of
 a devouring Fire. I suppose the Apostles meaning may be
 to this purpose; that That Preacher who takes more delight
 in discussing Points of Controversy, and the nice Specula-
 tions of School-Disputes, than in Preaching the Gospel so
 as it may best edify the generality of People that come to
 hear him; If to this he adds some superfluous Doctrines of
 his own, provided they be not Heretical, but he still holds
 the Foundation, yet all this may not damn him, if he does
 not at last deny Christ, but tho' his Works in the day of
 Trial shall prove but empty Chimera's, the vain Fancies of
 his own Brain, Wood and Stubble built upon the Founda-
 tion of the Gospel, and as such shall instantly be consumed,
 yet he himself may escape the deserved Punishment of an
 Unprofitable Preacher, but 'twill be, as a man whose House
 is on fire round about him, and all his Substance being burnt;
 he himself with great hazard of his Life escapes the Flames.
 For 'tis not to be thought that every petty Error incurs
 Damnation if it is not of Faith; for thus the Holy Fathers
 of the Church in all Ages have sail'd, yet their failings not
 thought damnable, so long as in all things necessary to Sal-
 vation they held to the Foundation. But the question is,
 Whether according to the sence of the Apostle, such Men
 must be saved by the fire of Purgatory? St. Austin tells us
 that, *Both good and bad, those on the right hand as well as
 those on the left, must be tried by this Fire the Apostle speaks
 of.* And a little after, *This Fire*, says he, *is to be understood
 as such, through which both must pass, They that build Gold,
 as well as those that build Wood.* And will any say that
 St. Peter, St. Paul, and the rest of the Apostles pass'd through
 Purgatory? Or will any of the Church of Rome assert this
 thing of their Seraphic St. Francis, St. Dominic, or their
 ever famous Loyola? 'Tis plain, the Apostle here speaks
 Metaphorically; he makes a Fire wherein a man is in dan-
 ger of Burning, a Similitude of the danger these Gnosticks

were

were in by building their vain and unprofitable Doctrines upon the Foundation which he had laid: So that upon the whole, I think the best way to explain a figurative Expression, is by a figurative Supposition. Let us therefore suppose a Foundation of Stone laid by some famous Builder: Two men take this Foundation whereon to Build em Houses to live in; one of the two Builds his House, we'll suppose of Gold and Silver; as the Apostle expresses it, but very plain and homely, after the rude *Gothic* way of Building, no way charming or delightful outwardly. The other makes use of no other Materials ~~but~~ Wood and Straw, but alarms the World with his curious Carving, and fine Devices, after the beautiful *Corinthian* Order, Stately and Magnificent, to Charm all that shall look on it, and so finishes a delicate Piece of Work. Now the common Vanity of the World is such; that Men are generally apt to part with all to please their Fancies; and so it is here, the Multitude admire his Building, and cry up the Workman almost to Adoration, and tho' his next Neighbour's House is built of Gold and Silver, yet 'tis a plain homely thing, rough and old-fashion'd, not worth taking notice of or looking on. But here, the Ingenuity and Art of the Workman; the singular contrivance of every part, the joint and apt connection and suitableness of the whole, the just Decorum and Harmony every where visible, the regularity of the Columns so adorn'd with all sorts of delightful Carv'd works, Fruits and Flowers; and, in a word, the whole Fabrick is so noble, and in all respects outwardly perfect, that 'tis preferable to all the Gold and Silver of the Universe. But now comes the day of Trial, when the Fire must try both these mens works, of what sort they are. The Foundation being Stone, the Fire passes on to the Building; And by reason of the first man's House being built with Gold and Silver, which the Fire cannot reduce into it self, That escapes untouch'd, only as there might possibly be a drossy substance on the outside, the Fire licks off that, and so, all the

the alteration it makes there, is, when that dross is consum'd the House appears much more splendid and glorious, as the Metal is more refin'd, and purify'd by the Fire. But the condition of the other fine Building, is quite contrary; for, consisting chiefly of Wood and Straw, and such combustible Matter, it presently takes fire, and burns furiously, that the Poor man, who is suddenly surpriz'd with the Calamity, being perhaps two or three Stories high, and the Flames ascending, and threatening Destruction round about him, knows of no way whereby to escape one danger, but by running into another: And delays in such cases being dangerous, he looks out at his Window, and, not considering the greatness of the fall, his fear of Burning being much greater, he at the hazard of his Life, endeavours to save it, by leaping down into the Street; whence, if he so escapes, he becomes a miserable Spectator of the Ruin of that, which but Yesterday was the Worlds wonder: and they that were before so taken with it, now see it reduc'd to Ashes, while the other House which before they thought so despicable, shines in their Imaginations as the Sun in the Firmament. This I take to be as lively a representation of the sence of the Text, as the words will bear: and then I leave to any reasonable Person to judge if the Apostle here speaks of any such place as Purgatory. I dare say, St. Chrysostom had no such thoughts; for repeating the same words, *But he shall be saved, yet so as by Fire*; "That is, says he, as a man that, when at Midnight his House is set on Fire, wakes and leaps out of Bed, and runs Naked out of Doors, taking nothing along with him, his only care being to free his own Body from the Flames. But the Gentlemen we are to deal with in these days are mere Grammatists where they can find any thing in the Letter that seems to favour their purpose, though the sence of the Text may be hid in a Figure. But he that can assert the Doctrine of Purgatory from such a Text as this, may as well say that the Apostle was a Mason or Carpenter, because he calls himself a Builder;

der;

der; or that he Preach'd to Houses and Walls, because he calls the *Corinthians* God's *Building*; or that our Saviour himself was a Stone, because he is expressly call'd *the head stone of the corner*. But whither would such absurdities hurry us? I assure you, Madam, 'tis very unreasonable to suppose the Doctrine from such a Text as this; and I think they can find none plainer than one of these two. Which being made thus plain to the contrary, I shall only briefly hint a few Texts against the particular Doctrine of Purgatory, and so conclude this Point.

Eccl. 11. 3.—*If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the Earth: and if the tree fall toward the South, or toward the North: in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall lie.*—This Text is a Metaphorical intimation of the state of the Soul after this life. As a Tree that is falling must fall one way, either *to the South or to the North, &c.*; So the Soul when it leaves the Body must go to some certain place: and as the Tree shall remain in the place where it fell, so the Soul must abide in the place whither she first goes when she leaves the Body. But the Preacher is more plain to the purpose, Chap. 12. 7. where he says, *The Dust, that is, Man's Body, shall return to the Earth as it was; and the Spirit shall return to God who gave it.* And the Prophet says, *Isai. 57. 3. The Righteous shall enter into Peace.*—Now according to the Practice of the Church of Rome in this particular, unless the special favour of the Bishop of Rome intervene, all, both good and bad, must pass through Purgatory, in order to their Perfection, tho' according to the Doctrine of the first Query, they may be more than perfect before they come thither. But what then becomes of the many Promises made to the Godly, both in the Old and New Testaments, if before they can enjoy the Rewards promis'd, they must undergo so severe a Punishment by the way?

Revel. 14. 13.—*And I heard a voice from Heaven, saying unto me, write, Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord;*
from

from henceforth—And, if there is any such place as Purgatory, wherein the best of Men must endure Torment for a Time, how can the Blood of Christ be said to *cleanse any from all Sin*, 1 Joh. 1. 7? Certainly, God does not require that his Servants shou'd pass through the Fire to purify 'em and make 'em fit for Heaven, after they are wash'd in the Blood of his Son. We are taught by the Apostle, *Heb. 9. 14.* that the Blood of Christ purges our Consciences from dead Works: but we quite destroy the belief of this, if we admit the least thought of any other Purgation. Our Saviour tells us, *Joh. 3. 18.* that *He that believeth on him is not condemned.* And if God does not condemn, 'tis hard to think he'll punish: which he must do, if the best of Men must pass through Purgatory before they can come to Heaven. But we can meet with no such place in the Scriptures. We find but two ways mention'd, a narrow and a broad; a strait gate and a wide, into one of which we must enter. And the Apostle says expressly, *All shall appear before the Judgment-seat of Christ, there to receive according to what we have done in the Body:* and then certainly, if there is any such place as Purgatory, God must be thought unjust in calling Men to account for their Sins when they are purg'd from 'em. But 'tis much safer to believe there is no such place.

a Cor. 5. 10.

Virgil indeed tells us of some such kind of place in the Sixth Book of his *Aeneas*, in his Account of *Aeneas's* Progress into the infernal World to visit his Father. "When he came to the *Stygian* shore, he saw Old *Charon* about his wonted Bus'ness, plying the Oars to carry such over as came thither for Passage. But he saw some miserable Ghosts on the Banks and in dark Woods thereabouts, to whom the old Ferry-man was very surly, and deny'd 'em Passage, tho' without doubt they'd have paid him as well for his pains as others did. *Aeneas*, as we may suppose, was amaz'd at this partiality, and ask'd his Guide, *What was the meaning of Charon's rough behaviour to those poor Souls?* To which she

the answers, *Those you see him take into his Boat are buried, and by that means challenge his Service; But those he beats away, are not. None must pass these Streams till the Ceremonies of their Funeral are perform'd; but they must abide in these dismal Shades on this side the River an Hundred years; unless they are buried sooner; and then, I suppose buried or not buried, they obtain their Passage.* Then the Poet sets down a Dialogue between *Aeneas* and his old Pilot *Palinurus*; who being unfortunately cast away, was kill'd in *Italy*; and by the cruel Murderers left unburied: for which reason he must be confin'd to this Purgatory, till those People, mov'd by Prodigious Omens, shoud Solemnize his Funeral. Now not to make a Parallel between this Fiction of the Poet, and the Purgatory of the Church of *Rome*, I shall only tell you, that, I have seen the place represented by them of that Church, not much unlike it. They have a River, in which many are plung'd up to the Neck, and labouring very hard to get out, at one side of the River is Hell's mouth open, to terrifie the poor Souls, and over their heads, Heaven for their Encouragement. Whether they intend this River for *Stryx* or *Acheron*, is not to the purpose; 'tis enough to suppose the Doctrine of Purgatory very ancient; because in vogue with the ancient *Romans* before *Christ's* coming into the World: tho' of late years it has got a Name which it wanted before, and as it was formerly known by the *Stygian* *shore*, *Black* *Reeds*, &c. now Purgatory is the Proper name of the place, and is therefore deservedly written with a Capital P.

6. The Sixth Enquiry proposed was, *Whether the Mass is a Sacrifice for the Quick and Dead.*

This Doctrine is built upon the other of Purgatory, and tis to be deliver'd from that place that Men are willing to trade for Masses and Indulgences: which has added so much to the Revenue of the Church, that it can now very hardly be laid aside.

But I have often thought it strange, that Men professing Christianity, should be so far bewitch'd to Gain as to deny the Efficacy of Christ's Sufferings. For if Indulgences will make amends for Sin, and the Mass atone for unrighteousness, what becomes of the All-sufficiency of Christ's Merits, the Satisfaction made by his Death? What need have Men to go so far about for Mercy and Forgiveness, when they may have it nearer home? Here's a Merchant has Indulgences to sell at reasonable Rates, by virtue of which a Man may gratifie the Lusts of his Flesh here, and when he Dies, a small Matter towards Building or Repairing some religious Conventicle, will purchase Masses enough to deliver him out of Purgatory; and then let any judge if such a Man is not far wiser than a sneaking Heretick, who lives in ignorance of these Catholick Helps and Salvo's. But for all that, if we may be allow'd to believe the Scriptures, we have no such by-ways to Heaven; the way that leadsthither is *strait* as well as *narrow*. So then, let others trust to Indulgences, and so be cheated of their Souls and Money too, while we tread in the Path which is made plain before us; and tho' we may want a little Elbow-room, yet 'tis better travelling so in a clean and safe way, than, by rambling out of it for more liberty, to trust to the Promise of a false Guide that we shall come into it again, and so follow him through Boggs and Rivers in danger of Drowning every step of the way. 'Tis evident enough, that the Son of God is our only Sacrifice; for the Apostle says, *1 Cor. 5. 7. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us*: And the Scriptures sufficiently testify, that by one Oblation of himself once offer'd, he made sufficient Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World. And then what need have we of farther Sacrifices? nay, what warrant can be brought from the Word of God, to justify the Sacrifice of the Mass, which is the only new one contended for? The Apostle, *Rom. 12. 1*, Exhorts us to *present our Bodies a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, as our reasonable Service*. Which Text Bel-

Jarmin thinks sufficient to the purpose, and thus he argues:
 " *Suavia* is a Sacrifice properly so call'd, that is, an External
 " Oblation, made only to God, wherein by a lawful Mini-
 " ster, some sensible Substance is by Mystical rites conse-
 " crated, and so chang'd, or, in reference to what it was
 " before, destroy'd. But Christians have no such Sacrifice
 " to offer to God, but the Mass. Neither are the *Romans*
 " here commanded to Kill themselves; for that wou'd be
 " an heinous Sin. Therefore the Mass must be the Sacrifice
 " here spoken of. And farther *Suavia*, which is the word
 " here used by the Apostle, is that Sacrifice which is offer'd
 " by a lawful Minister. But no Sacrifice is among Christians
 " offer'd by the Minister, but the Mass. Therefore the Mass
 " is *Suavia*, or a proper Sacrifice. Now not to say the Mass
 is no sensible Substance, which he makes the main condi-
 tion of a Sacrifice, I shall at present thus examine the Ar-
 gument.

1. The Apostle does not speak here of the office of a Mi-
 nister, but the Duty of the Ministers and People both. All
 are to present their Bodies a living Sacrifice. *I beseech you*
therefore, Brethren, &c.

2. Therefore supposing the Mass was a sensible Substance,
 yet the Apostle can't intend that, because that is to be offer'd
 by the Minister only.

3. Granting all he wou'd have in reference to the Mass's
 being a Sacrifice, yet the word *Suavia* is as properly us'd by
 the Apostle in reference to the Sacrifice of a Man's Body, as
 of the Mass: For 'tis confess'd that *Suavia* is an Oblation
 made to God only, wherein some sensible Substance is by
 mystical Rites consecrated, and so chang'd, or, in reference
 to what it was before, destroy'd. Accordingly, the Apo-
 stle advises us to present our Bodies *a living Sacrifice unto*
God; and in the next Verse, *Be not conformed to this World*:
 where, by our renouncing the World, we consecrate our
 Bodies to God's Service, and so, as the Apostle farther ex-
 horts us, we are transform'd or chang'd by the renewing of

our Mind ; and our Bodies in reference to what they were before, corrupted and polluted by Sin, are destroy'd.

4. So then the Apostle here makes use of a Metaphor to express a reasonable Duty ; as a Sacrifice is laid on the Altar, kill'd and cut in pieces, so we must die to sin, and mortify our Members which are upon the Earth, cut off all Affections to this World, keep our Bodies under, and bring 'em into subjection to the Will of God, and so being transformed from what we were before, Servants and Sacrifices to Sin, we become holy Sacrifices and acceptable to God. Whence,

5. Let us enquire what are the proper Sacrifices of Christians, because he says, that they have no other but the Mass. St. Peter, 1 Ep. c. 2. v. 5, says, *we as lively Stones, are built upon a spiritual house, an holy Priesthood, to offer up spiritual Sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.* And what those spiritual Sacrifices are, we may be inform'd by other places of Scripture. The Psalmist, *Psal. 4. 5.* advises us to offer to God the Sacrifices of Righteousness. And, *Psal. 50. 23.* *Who so offereth Praise, glorifieth God.* And, *51. 17, 19.* *The Sacrifices of God are a broken Spirit : and, the Lord will be pleas'd with Sacrifices of Righteousness.* And, *Psal. 141. 2.* *Let my Prayer be set before thee as Incense ; and the lifting up of my hands, as the evening Sacrifice.* These are great Expressions from one under the Law, when the Morning and Evening Sacrifices were so absolutely necessary. But what have we from those that were under the Gospel? Our Blessed Saviour of right challenges the first place, who in his own Person, blames the Pharisees for not knowing the meaning of this, *I will have Mercy and not Sacrifice, Matth. 23. 7.* The Apostle is very plain, to the purpose, *Phil. 4. 15.* &c. *Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the Gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no Church communicated with me, as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica, ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift : but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. But I have all, and*
abound :

abound: I am full, having receiv'd of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an Odour of a sweet smell, a Sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God. From all which, the Sacrifices of Christians are Mercy, Alms-Deeds, Prayer, Praise, Contrition, and all Christian Duties. And these are the Sacrifices which are to be offer'd up to God, by every living Christian for himself. But I can find no such Sacrifice as the Mass, nor indeed any other than those above-mention'd. For Christ Jesus is the Sacrifice for all Christians in general, and these are Sacrifices which every Christian must offer to God for himself in particular. And thus I have briefly given my Opinion of the Mass, which amounts to this in the general, that Christ being our Sacrifice and Propitiation, we have no reason to think of any other; and he having offer'd himself once to God for all, there can be no other Offerings needful, but such as every Man must offer for himself, *the Sacrifice of Righteousness*. And as the Mass is not a Sacrifice for the Living, neither can it be suppos'd a Sacrifice for the Dead.

If Christ Jesus has made satisfaction for the Sins of all that are call'd by his Name; and if that satisfaction is certainly appl'd to all who are true Christians, and Die in the Faith of Christ Crucified, and if this is made the absolutely necessary Condition of having a Title to that satisfaction, I can see no ground Wicked Men have to hope for pardon, if they forfeit that. The Scriptures are altogether silent as to any thing that can be done for us after Death. To which purpose I'll give you the trouble of the following Instances.

1. Holy *David*, when God struck the Child he had by *Bathsheba*, pray'd for its recovery, and fasted and lay all Night upon the Earth: His sorrow for the Child's Sickness was intolerable. But when the Child was Dead, he arose from the Earth, and Washed, and Anointed himself, and changed his Apparel, and came into the House of the Lord and Worshipped: then he came to his own House, and having

ving Bread set before him he did eat. Then said his Servants to him, What thing is this that thou hast done; thou didst fast and weep for the Child while it was alive, but when the Child was dead, thou didst arise and eat Bread. And he said, *While the Child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: For I said, who can tell whether God will be gracious unto me, that the Child may live, 2 Sam. 12. 22.* We read nothing here of any Sacrifice offer'd for the Child, which certainly wou'd have been recorded if such a thing had been done: but he did not so much as pray for him or weep after his Death. For,

2. No Man can by ANY means redeem his Brother, or give to God a ransom for him, *Psal. 49. 7.* I think this is plain enough against any thing that is pretended to be done for the benefit of the Dead; and if no Ransom can redeem a Man from the State he immediately passes into out of this World, what signifie the many Masses that are sent up daily for one or other in the Church of Rome? I think it wou'd not be impertinent to add that of our Saviour, *What shall it profit a Man if he shall gain the whole World and lose his own Soul? Or what shall a Man give in exchange for his Soul? Mark 8. 36.* Which shews the impossibility of Redemption from a State after this Life. And this is farther evident in *Luke 16.* in the Discourse between Abraham and Dives, where Abraham tells him, *Verse 26. That between them there is a great Gulf fixed:* So that they which wou'd pass from one to t'other cou'd not. And then I wou'd fain know how they can say that any can be fetch'd out of Purgatory, as Hell is more mildly call'd, to Heaven? But,

3. The Apostle tells the *Thessalonians, 1 Thes. 4. 13. that he wou'd not have 'em to be ignorant, concerning them which are asleep, nor to sorrow, as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.* The Apostles and the Primitive Christians had their hopes in the Resurrection;

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surrection; they had no thought of a state of Punishment
 after Death, from which they were to be freed by the Sa-
 crifice of the Mass, but they built all upon the Merits of
 Christ's Blood, the full satisfaction which he had made, and
 on that score made it their constant endeavour to become
 worthy partakers of it. The Scriptures make no mention
 of Offertories for the Dead, but in many places they ar-
 gue clear the contrary: That there is no time or place of
 calling on God in the Grave, or for those that are in their
 Graves: All shall at the Day of Judgment receive accord-
 ing to what they have done in the Body. There's no Ex-
 piation of Guilt after Death, but he that is not absolv'd in
 this Life must be miserable for ever. Therefore these per-
 formances on the behalf of the Dead, are no better than a
 breach of the Third Commandment, a taking God's Name
 in vain, by calling on him for those, for whom he cannot
 be intreated. Upon the whole therefore, we may truly
 say with the Preacher, *Eccl. 9. 4. To him that is join'd to
 all the living, there is hope:* But to him that is dead there
 is no hope but what his way of living here will admini-
 ster to him.

I conclude this with the words of the Apostle, *Heb. 13.*
7, &c. Remember them which have the Rule over you, who
have spoken unto you the word of God: whose Faith follow,
considering the end of their Conversation. Jesus Christ the
same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. Be not carried a-
bout with divers and strange Doctrines: For it is a good thing
that the heart be established with Grace, not with Meats,
which have not profited them which have been occupied therein.
We have an Altar whereof they have no right to eat, which
serve the Tabernacle. For the Bodies of those Beasts whose
Blood is brought into the Sanctuary by the High-Priest for Sin,
are burnt without the Camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he
might sanctifie the People with his own Blood, suffer'd without
the Gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him, without the
Camp, bearing his reproach: For here we have no continuing
 City,

City, but we seek one to come. By him therefore let us offer the Sacrifice of Praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our Lips, giving thanks to his Name. But to do good, and to communicate, forget not: for with such Sacrifices God is well pleased.

7. Now I come to the Seventh and last Enquiry proposed, *viz. Whether the Doctrine of Transubstantiation can be maintain'd by Scripture?*

This has been endeavour'd by our Adversaries, but to no purpose. And the Scriptures furnish us with two very good Arguments to the contrary. Which are,

1. That Christ's Body can be in but one place at once.
2. That we eat the Body and drink the Blood of Christ only by Faith. Against both which, Transubstantiation makes Christ's Body visible in a Thousand places at once; and asserts that we eat the very natural Flesh of Christ, and gnaw it with our Teeth as we do our common Meat. And since in this Case we are denied the use of our Senses, we must be judg'd by the Sence of the Scriptures.

And first, The Scriptures testify, That Christ's Body can be in but one place at once.

Our Saviour, *Matth. 26. 11.* tells us, *We have the Poor always with us but him we have not always.* For, *John 16. 28.* *As he came forth from the Father into the World, so again he will leave the World and go to the Father.* Accordingly, *Mark 16. 19.* when he had spoken to his Disciples, *he was received up into Heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.* And there St. Stephen afterwards saw him, *Acts 7. 56.* In which place, as St. Peter testifies, *Acts 3. 21.* he must remain till the times of the restitution of all things. When, and not before, *he shall so come in like manner, as he was seen to go into Heaven, Acts 1. 11.* Now, I suppose you know the last shift they that believe this Doctrine are fain to fly to, is God's Omnipotency, and this they know we dare not contradict. But we know, that though God is able to do any thing, yet 'tis evident in many things he does

does not apply his Will to his Ability: And on this account, though *John Baptist* told the *Jews*, *Matth. 3. 9.* *That God was able of the Stones of the Earth to raise up Children unto Abraham*, we must not presently make the Fable of *Demalion* and *Pyrrha* an Article of our Faith. For if this would do the business, how soon would the World be fill'd with Absurdities, and yet all pass for Miracles? But if we consult the Sacred Writings, we shall find that though God is sufficiently declar'd to be Omnipotent, yet he never acted any thing contrary to himself, his Power never appear'd contrary to his Will. Now in the present case, if we believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God, and that his Will is declar'd in his Word, it sufficiently appears, that Christ must be Corporally present in Heaven, 'till the end of the World; and then, to say that he is Corporally present on Earth too, and in so many Thousand places at the same time, because nothing is impossible with God, is to say in effect that God, to shew his Power, does some things which are repugnant to his Will; and to preserve the Pre-rogative of his Omnipotence inviolate, will upon occasion contradict his own Word. But the Apostles had no such thoughts, some of 'em saw Christ ascend Bodily into Heaven, and others, as *St. Stephen*, and *St. Paul*, afterwards saw him Bodily present there. Accordingly *St. Paul* tells the *Hebrews*, *Chap. 8. Verse 1.* that he is set on the Right Hand of the Throne of the Majesty in the Heavens. And *Chap. 10. Verse 12.* After he had offer'd one Sacrifice for Sins for ever, he sat down on the Right Hand of God. Where be pleas'd to observe two Errors confuted in one Text, The Sacrifice of the Mass, in that Christ has offer'd one Sacrifice for Sins for ever; and the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, in that after he had offer'd the Sacrifice, he sat down on the Right Hand of God. Therefore his Advice to the *Colossians*, *Chap. 3. Verse 1.* is, *If they are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the*

Right Hand of God. For, Phil. 3. 20. our Conversation, says he, is in Heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore, Madam, I think the Counsel of our Lord himself is best to be follow'd, Matth. 24. 23. If any Man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not.

Secondly, Another Argument deducible from Scripture, against this Doctrine, I told you, was, *That we eat the Body, and drink the Blood of Christ, only by Faith.*

John 6. 47, &c. *Verily, verily I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath Everlasting Life. I am that Bread of Life. Your Fathers did eat Manna in the Wilderness, and are dead. This is the Bread which cometh down from Heaven, that a Man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the Living Bread which came down from Heaven. If any Man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever: And the Bread that I will give, is my Flesh, which I will give for the Life of the World. Where we are to consider, First, That Faith in Christ is made the Condition of having Everlasting Life, Verse 47. Secondly, The Bread of Life, which, Verse 51. is call'd his Flesh, is only that Spiritual Nourishment of the Soul, which comes by that Faith in Christ: And therefore he says, that if any Man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever. Whence I think it plainly appears, that eating Christ's Flesh, and believing on him, are only terms used promiscuously one for t'other, and so make nothing at all for Transubstantiation. But the chief of the Argument is to come, Verse 52, &c. — The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this Man give us his Flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you. Whoso eateth my Flesh, and Drinketh my Blood, hath Eternal Life, and I will raise him*

him up at the last Day. For my Flesh is Meat indeed, and my Blood is Drink indeed. He that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the Living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so, he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that Bread which came down from Heaven; not as your Fathers did eat Manna, and are dead: He that eateth of this Bread shall live for ever. — Perhaps you may think, Madam, that these reiterated expressions are Indications plain enough that our Saviour here intends Transubstantiation: But I assure you they mean nothing less. For, first, he says, *Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you.* And on the contrary, *Who so eateth his Flesh, and drinketh his Blood, hath Eternal Life, and he will raise him up at the last Day.* Now, if our Saviour speaks all this of his natural Flesh and Blood, with which he was cloathed, and which was nail'd to the Cross and spilt on the Ground; and lastly, which he carried with him into Heaven; and if, according to the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, his natural Flesh and Blood are as really eaten and drunk in the Lord's Supper, Then, all Men, bad as well as good, nay any living Creature that is but capable of eating and drinking, may be in as fair a way to Heaven as the devoutest Professor of Christianity. For if eating the Flesh of Christ will carry one to Heaven, give a Dog a piece of the Transubstantiated Bread, and why may not he by eating it go thither too? However, to exclude Beasts, it wou'd be a blessed World certainly, if the worst of Men were in as sure a way to Salvation, as the best! which must be, if the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, and our Saviour's Words hold together. For he says, *his Flesh is Meat indeed, and his Blood is Drink indeed.* And Transubstantiation gives all Men the real Flesh and Blood of Christ, and by eating and drinking them we get Salvation, which is here call'd *Eternal Life.* But

Secondly, *He that eateth Christ's Flesh, and drinketh his Blood, dwelleth in Christ, and Christ in him.* Now can Christ dwell in a Wicked Man, or Unbeliever? What Fellowship hath Christ with Belial? Thirdly, *This is that Bread which came down from Heaven: not as our Fathers did eat Manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this Bread shall live for ever.* Whence observe; If one thing is to be understood according to the Letter, another is also. And then if the Letter intends Transubstantiation, according to the Letter likewise, they who eat the Flesh of Christ presently become Immortal. And thus the Jews understood our Saviour, when they cried out, *Lord, evermore give us of this Bread.* Verse 34. But 'tis appointed for all Men once to die. Therefore, eating the Flesh of Christ, and drinking his Blood, can mean nothing but our feeding on him by Faith unto Salvation. And if by eating the Flesh of Christ, and drinking his Blood, we shall live for ever, and yet no Man can be saved unless he believes in him, either our Saviour must be thought to contradict himself, or else this overthrowes the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, and proves that we only eat and drink the Flesh and Blood of Christ by Faith. And I appeal to your self, Madam, to judge which of the two 'tis most reasonable to believe. But that what our Saviour says here, is not to be understood according to the Letter, will appear if we pursue it a little farther, Verse 60. — *Many therefore of his Disciples, when they heard this, said, This is a hard Saying, who can bear it? When Jesus knew in himself, that his Disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Dost this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before? It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the Flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are Life. But there are some of you that believe not.* From all which, I could tell you, Madam, and upon good ground too, that there is nothing in this Chapter, or very little at

most,

most, touching the *Eucharist*; but all that our Saviour says concerning his Flesh and Blood, is to be understood of his exemplary Life, and whollome Doctrine, which is Meat and Drink indeed. But supposing the whole discourse to be upon that subject, yet there can be nothing of Transubstantiation contain'd in it. Which will yet more fully appear by considering how often he urges the necessity of believing on him in order to Salvation: *Verse 29. This, says he, is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.* So, *Verse 35. He that believeth on me, shall never thirst.* But I said unto you, that ye also have seen me, and believe not. Again, *Verse 40. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have Everlasting Life: and I will raise him up at the last Day.* So likewise, *Verse 47. He that believeth on me, hath Everlasting Life.* And this believing on him, in other places of the Chapter he calls, coming to him; as, *Verse 35. 37. 44. 45.* And in other places again, it is call'd eating his Flesh, and drinking his Blood. Whence 'tis evident, they are all Synonymous terms used to express one and the same thing. But to proceed.

The Apostle, *1 Cor. 10. 1.* tells us, that all our Fathers were under the Cloud, and all passed through the Sea: and were all baptized unto Moses in the Cloud, and in the Sea, and did all eat the same Spiritual Meat, and did all drink the same Spiritual Drink (for they drank of that Spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ). Now the Paschal Lamb, was as lively a representation of Christ, the Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World, as our Bread and Wine are, of the breaking his Body and shedding his Blood upon the Cross: yet 'twas never thought that they in the Passover did eat and drink Christ's real Flesh and Blood; but only in that Feast they fed on him by Faith. And so when we come duly prepar'd to the Lord's Table,

Table, we are Partakers of his Body and Blood by Faith, by which also Christ dwelleth in our hearts, *Ephes. 3. 17.* Our Saviour, *Joh. 15. 5.* says, *I am the Vine, ye are the Branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.* Now, if all our Saviour's words must be taken according to the letter, which must we rather believe, that his Flesh is Bread, to be eaten by us as we do our ordinary Food, or that he is a great Tree, and we Christians are so many Branches growing from him; or that we are mere Sheep feeding on a Common, and he the Shepherd to look after us; or lastly, that he is a Door hung upon Hinges, thro' which we Sheep must enter into our Pasture? I would fain know, if all these were to be taken literally, what we should do to know which was true, and which not? Such Expressions as these must be taken Metaphorically; and so, As we usually enter into a House by the Door, so we go to Heaven by Christ: As a Shepherd takes care that none of his Sheep go astray, so Christ the good Shepherd of our Souls, will lose none of all them that are his: As a Vine gives Nourishment to its Branches, so is Christ a Vine to us, by whom we live and grow ripe for a joyful Harvest, or Vintage: And lastly, as Bread is eaten to sustain this Temporal Life; so Christ is that Spiritual Food on which we feed by Faith unto life Everlasting.

To what has been said on this Subject, we may add many Texts of Scripture, which assert the Elements which are the Matter of this Feast, to be the same after Consecration, as they were before. Thus the Apostle, *1 Cor. 10. 16.* *The cup of Blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ? The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ?* So again, *Chap. 11. v. 26.* *As often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.* But that which is chiefly in-

fitted on, is what our Lord himself said at the Institution of his Supper; *Matth. 26. 26. And as they were eating, Jesus took Bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the Disciples, and said, Take, eat, this is my Body. And he took the Cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, drink ye all of it. For this is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the Remission of Sins.* If here is not plain Transubstantiation, I know not where to find it. Our Saviour himself in the presence of his Disciples takes a piece of Bread, and plainly affirms that 'tis his Body; and shall not we believe him? yes, surely. But what follows? *Vers. 29, But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this Fruit of the Vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom.* I think he tells us as plainly here, that the Wine was still the Fruit of the Vine after Consecration, as before he did, that it was his Blood. But to this we may add what *St. Luke* says of his instituting his Supper, *Luk. 22. 19, And he took Bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my Body which is given for you: and so of the Cup, This is the New Testament of my Blood, which is shed for you.* Where, if I were given to Criticism, I might take notice, as *Beza* has done, that Christ says, *This is my Body, which is given, for you, not to you.* But to let that pass; we know that Christ was not yet Crucified, till after the institution of this Feast: So that here's another figure, he makes use of the Present Tense instead of the Future, instead of, *this is my Body, which shall be given for you*, he says, *which is given for you*, as if it was a thing already done. Now in my opinion, it wou'd have been much more for Transubstantiation, if he had us'd the Future Tense, and told 'em plainly, *This is my Body which shall be crucified for you: and his acting the contrary, nulls all Pretences to the Doctrine from his words.* But *Bellarmin* has wittily suggested another kind of Argument, which I shall the rather mention, because it has

has lately been started afresh, and that is, "If these words, "*Hoc est corpus meum*", do not intend Transubstantiation, they must want a Grammatical Construction. For the Pronoun *Hoc* cannot Adjectively agree with *Bread*, as its antecedent Substantive: for *Bread* is of the Masculine Gender. Neither can *Hoc* be spoken Substantively, of a thing that is seen and openly known, unless that thing be of the Neuter Gender: But *Bread* is of the Masculine, both in the Greek and Latin. No man going to shew another his Brother wou'd say, *Hoc est frater meus*: neither wou'd any man say of the King's Image, *Hoc est Caesar*. But all this is but a sly Insinuation, to cajole those that know no more of Grammar than this Argument wou'd teach 'em. And I have so much Charity for that great Man, as to believe him too good a Grammarian to be gull'd by so poor an Artifice. I suppose he cou'd not be ignorant, if he knew any thing almost of the invalidity of such a shift, he knew well enough, I dare say, that *Hoc* is here us'd as a Relative; and, as such, that it might very well refer to either of the two Substantives, *Bread*, or *Body*; and in this case the seeing, or not seeing the Bread signified nothing: but as the Relative wou'd refer to both *Bread* and *Body*, it was in his Power to make it agree with which of the Substantives pleas'd him. And so, *Hic est Corpus meum*, wou'd have made as much for Transubstantiation, as *Hoc*, &c. and wou'd have been as liable to Cavil and Dispute: yet he that spake the words wou'd shew himself a good Grammarian either way. And so, tho' 'tis true, 'twou'd be improper to say of a man's Brother, *Hoc est frater meus*, yet it may well enough be said of the King's Image, *Hoc est Caesar*, because, as *Hoc* relates to the Image and not to *Caesar* immediately, the Image being a thing without life, for that reason the Relative is of the Neuter Gender. But to take a Simile nearer to the present question: Suppose a little Girl, as like her Father as 'tis possible for her to be, she being among

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more of her Sisters, any Person shou'd single her out from the rest, and say of her, *This is the Father himself*; I wou'd know how we shou'd make this Sentence into *Latin* to avoid a Metamorphosis? I must confess, if it had been spoken thus, *This Girl, &c. Hæc Puella*, the Article of the Feminine Gender had been most proper: but as the word *Girl* is only included for understood, and *Father* express, the Article of the Masculine Gender is as proper, because, the Article may indifferently be refer'd to either the *Girl*, or the *Father*. And this suggests to me another Argument against taking these words of our Saviour literally. The *Girl* here, by reason of her being so like her Father, is said to be the very Father himself: Now wou'd not the By-standers be call'd Fools or worse, if they shou'd presently vindicate the Poet's Metamorphosis of *Iphis*, by believing the *Girl* is at that instant turn'd into a *Man*? and yet the Expression is no Hyperbole; but as the common way of speech is, to call the Picture or Representative of a *Man*, the *Man* himself: and thus our Saviour might say, *This is my Body*, and yet only intend the sign for the thing signified.

All this while, I think I have not made the least appeal to our Sences, tho' in a Matter so obvious to 'em, and yet can find no ground for the belief of Transubstantiation. But, as in things that are obvious to sense, our Senses cannot be deceiv'd; so neither did our Saviour ever deny us the Evidence of our Senses in such cases: but thus he expostulates; *Have ye not seen the Miracles which I did openly?* And in order to convince us of the reality of his Resurrection, he appeals constantly to our Senses: *Reach hither thine hand; and thrust it into my side; a Spirit hath not flesh and bones,*

as ye see me have : He is not here, says the Angel, but is risen as he said : see the place where they laid him, There's none of him. And why might not he have had two Bodies then, one in the Grave, and another to shew to his Disciples, as well as so many Thousand now ? No, then his Resurrection wou'd have been taken as a Trick, that some body like him had personated him : for 'twou'd be contrary to sence, that the same Body shou'd be whole and entire in two places so far distant at the same time. Twou'd be a Miracle, but against reason ; and that no Miracle ever was, but the Miracle of Transubstantiation. Some Articles of Faith, are above our Reason, or Sence ; but none contrary to both Reason and Sence.

And thus, Madam, I have endeavour'd to prove the great Disagreement between some of the Principal Doctrines of the Church of Rome, and the Holy Scriptures. And this I presume I may say for my self, that wherein I have meddl'd in the clearing of an obscure Text, I have done nothing out of a design'd Endeavour to run down an Opinion, but as I thought in my Conscience it was Erroneous.

One thing only I desire at your hands, if you let any of the adverse Party have a sight of these Papers, that you wou'd desire 'em to be upon the square, and not quote Humane Testimonies against the Holy Scriptures : And if they can make good those Doctrines here censur'd, from the Word of God, notwithstanding what is here produc'd, I my self will become a Roman Catholick with the first appearance of Truth in those Doctrines I have hitherto thought False. But as I think that can never be done, so I humbly recommend this plain, but, I hope, faithful Piece to your serious Perusal, and hope it may

may prove to your compleat Satisfaction, and that you may reap the full Benefit of a sincere Believer of the Gospel in the end. Which, that God of his infinite Grace and Mercy, through his Son Christ Jesus, will grant to you and yours, is, and ever shall be the constant and hearty Prayer of,

Madam,

Your most humble Servant, &c.

F I N I S.
